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THE
ADULTERESS;
OR,
ANECDOTES
OF
TWO NOBLE FAMILIES.

A TALE.

In Four Volumes.

BY AN ENGLISH-WOMAN.

Our actions are our heralds, and they fix
Beyond the date of tombs and epitaphs,
Renown or infamy. —————

TOBIN'S CURFEW.

VOL. III.

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THE

ADULTERESS ;

OR,

Anecdotes of Two Noble Families.

There's some peculiar in each leaf and grain,
Some unmark'd fibre, or some varying vein.
Shall only man be taken in the gross?
Grant but as many sorts of mind as moss.

POPE.

MISS MAITLAND, continued to reside with her brother, Sir William, principally at Melbury Park:—and those years devoted to the completion of the young people's education, were marked with so little variety, only meeting together at each vacation, that I shall pass over the intermediate time, and recommence my history at that period, when Emily, the youngest of the party, had completed her eighteenth year.

They had all assembled at Melbury to partake of the festivities of Christmas; and as they have now started up from children into men and women, it may not be improper to give my readers an insight into their characters, as they appeared at the time of this merry meeting.

Edward Maitland, who, as the eldest son, and heir of Sir William, I shall first mention, was at this period, about four and twenty. Though he would have been the last to claim precedence—for he was the most diffident and retired of the whole group. He was possessed of an excellent understanding; but had imbibed some singular opinions, for a young man of his age, and situation in life.

An event, which had happened in the family, at an early period of his life, had tinged his mind with sadness, that strengthened as he advanced in years, into a kind of habitual thoughtfulness; which made him appear to some persons as labouring under an infirmity of tem-

per:—but they were those who knew him not;—for a more worthy, amiable young man did not exist.

Strict in integrity, and virtuous from principle, he would never in the slightest circumstance deviate from the truth. Firm as a rock, when occasion prompted; he was, at the same time, so mild and merciful, and possessed of a sensibility so acute, that, whilst listening to a tale of sorrow, (to which he never refused to lend an ear) he would, not unfrequently be softened into tears.

But his sensibility was never so far awakened, when the sorrow was occasioned by any guilt or misconduct of their own. Then, he would gently admonish—and, perhaps, bestow some transient relief:—but his pity was only interested for those, whose misfortunes were attributable to those unforeseen occurrences, which no prudence can avert—such as accidents—loss of health—and, the “thousand natural ills that flesh is

“heir to.”——For such, he would warmly interest himself:—and exert his utmost ability to assist, relieve, and, if possible, remove their distress.

He could seldom be prevailed on to attend those fashionable assemblies of the day, or more properly the night, called routs;—where the virtuous and the vicious are mingled in one miscellaneous crowd. Where his feelings were liable to be outraged, and, his sense of decency disgusted, by seeing those attentions paid to a worthless female, (who had neither youth or poverty to plead as excuses for her disgraceful conduct,) which ought, exclusively, to have been the right of a neglected wife.

The very admittance of such a woman into a family of respectability, he considered as an Encouragement held out to Vice.—Nor did he think the heads of such families had any reason to complain, if their sons and daughters, vitiated by having such an example placed before

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their eyes, should, at some future period, disgrace themselves and their connexions, by adopting a similar mode of conduct.

His notions in regard to the conduct of women, may, perhaps, be thought, by some, as rather too strict and particular, but, having witnessed the fatal effects arising from a laxity of principle, by a dereliction from virtue, in a female, to whom he was nearly connected ; he could not but consider Chastity as the first, and most essential virtue in a woman, without which, all others were of little, or no value.

In society, it was his opinion, that a line should be distinctly drawn as a boundary between Vice and Virtue :— and his indignation was strongly excited, whenever he met, in company, with any of those women, who having once broken their matrimonial vow, and left their innocent children to unmerited reproach— (from having been the offspring of an unprincipled mother)—were now married.

to their seducers, or, as he was generally inclined to think, those whom they had seduced—and were again received into society, as if they had never been guilty of any crime.—When, in his opinion, such women were infinitely more reprehensible, than even those unfortunate wanderers, who nightly parade the public streets. These, in the first instance, might have had poverty to plead in excuse for embracing a life of frailty : but the others, having no such plea to offer, could only have been actuated by their own wicked and depraved inclinations.

His opinion of women in general, indeed, was not a very favourable one :—for even the young ones, whom he happened to meet with, seemed, with very few exceptions, to be so bold and full of levity ; so devoted to dress and admiration ; and so confident and unblushing in their whole deportment ; that, as he felt he never could entrust his happiness in the keeping of any one of them, he had

made a determination in his own mind, never to marry.

His father, who knew him exactly calculated to shine in the characters of husband and of parent, and to find happiness in a life of domestic duties, was particularly anxious to combat his predilection for a single life, as his first wish was to see him married:—and, for this purpose, had proposed several young women, of whose pretensions he thought favourably; and with whose families he was acquainted. But, hitherto, without success.—He always endeavoured to laugh off the subject, by saying—“It is all to no purpose:—I am, decidedly, an Old Bachelor.”

His brother, Henry, was of a disposition very dissimilar. He was one of those every-day characters, so commonly to be met with.—Good-natured, when met with no opposition; but seldom giving up his own pleasure to promote that of another. If he went into any promiscuous

assembly, and found the company there met together, agreeable and entertaining, he never considered whether they were persons entitled to his esteem;—if he received amusement, he was satisfied;—and never troubled himself concerning their characters, as long as they were visited by persons of respectability, and served to contribute to the general hilarity.

From a careless ease, and freedom of manner, he was generally a favourite with those who are styled the World—that is, the World of Fashion—whilst his brother was regarded by them as an eccentric being, whose ideas and manners were perfectly antediluvian. He did not, like that brother, profess any disinclination to marriage; on the contrary, it was his intention to seek a wife;—but then, she must have a large fortune, or how was he, a younger brother, to keep up, else, a sufficient establishment.

Thus, in every point, the two brothers

were perfectly dissimilar;—though, by the generality of persons, Henry was reckoned the most pleasant, and agreeable young man of the two.

Arthur, or, as we must now call him, Lord Vaversly, (having succeeded to the title and estates of his father,) was about the same age as Edward Maitland; to whom, his disposition, in many points, bore a strong resemblance. With the same love of virtue, the same strictness of principle; he had, unfortunately, like his father, so large a portion of the Pride of Ancestry, that it threw a shade over a character, which was, in every other respect, completely estimable.

It was, however, in a much less degree, and never accompanied by those haughty, unpleasant manners, which had appeared so disgusting in the character of his father; for he seldom suffered it to appear:—but it swayed his actions, and governed his motives, without being, at times, scarcely conscious, himself, that it did so..

Yet very different was its effect upon him, and upon his father—for merit was sure to engage his warm esteem and admiration, in whatever shape it might appear.

To his uncle, and his grandmother, he ever paid the most unremitting attention ; and, when in London, never suffered a week to elapse, without paying them a visit at Clapham ; where his uncle, who had now entirely quitted business, and who was a complete martyr to the gout, constantly resided. His grandmother was, as she ever had been, a sensible, intelligent woman ; and his uncle, though of blunt manners, had one of the best hearts, that ever beat within the bosom of any human being. He knew how to appreciate the value of such relatives, and regarded them with an affection truly filial :—whilst they, in their turn, absolutely idolized him.

To his sister he was affectionate and kind ; and when, upon his coming of age,

he had taken possession of his father's house in Grosvenor Square, had requested her to reside with him. But she, not wishing to leave Miss Maitland, or to separate from her youthful companion, Emily, had begged to decline his offer.

Added to the motives here assigned, she had, likewise, in this rejection, been actuated by a lurking partiality for Henry Maitland, which she was scarcely conscious of, herself. She had, therefore, as before, continued to reside in the house of Sir William Maitland, with his sister, and her beloved companion, Emily.

Miss Maitland she considered in the light of a mother, and loved and respected her as such: and for Emily she entertained the affection of a sister.—Nay, there were times, when she hoped she should see her so in reality, for Arthur, she had remarked, was upon every occasion loud in her praise, and warm in his admiration of her good qualities.

She would sometimes rally Emily upon

the subject ; — who would only laugh, and say — She should as soon expect to marry her brother, if she had one.

Olivia Vaversly was a lively, unaffected girl, just turned of twenty ; and so good-tempered, that she was a general favourite in the family. Though without the least tincture of pride, she had yet too much good sense, not to assert a proper dignity when occasion prompted, either to repress presumption, or discourage impertinence. For, it being whispered about, that she had a large, independant fortune, she was assailed by a host of admirers ; who each flattered himself that he should be the successful candidate for her favour.

They were, in some degree, encouraged by the ease and vivacity of her manner ; which, though free and unreserved, never dwindled into levity : but her heart was shielded from any dangers of this kind, by her latent attachment to Henry Maitland—which had arisen almost uncon-

sciously in her bosom, and which none of the family, not even the object of it, had, as yet, suspected.

He admired her as a good-humoured laughing girl, who was ever ready to have a romp with him, or to enter with him, in a dispute, merely for the sake of argument:—but, being brought up, as it were, together, he considered her more in the light of a sister, and never entertained the most distant idea, that she had imbibed any other sentiment for him, than, perhaps, a sort of sisterly affection, such as she appeared to entertain for his brother, and Emily.

Emily, who was the youngest, is the only one of the youthful group that remains to be mentioned—and her character may be comprised in a very few words. She was retired, without shyness;—modest, without bashfulness;—and though sensible, yet unobtrusive. Her's was a character, the merits of which were not to be discovered at the first glance:—but the

more she was known, the more she was beloved. Charitable and humane, but perfectly unostentatious, her bounty was bestowed in private:—for the liberal allowance of her Benefactress, enabled her in this way, to fulfil every wish of her heart.

To Miss Maitland, who had so generously supplied to her the place of both her parents, she bore an affection even more than filial:—gratitude, and veneration for her character, of which she entertained the most exalted opinion, raised in her a kind of enthusiasm, such as can only be conceived by a person of similar feelings, and in a situation like that in which Emily was placed.

One only wish, had she, that remained ungratified—and that was, to find out who were her parents, and that she was not the illegitimate offspring of vice or profligacy:—for much rather would she have hailed her parents, as persons of an inferior station, bearing a good character,

than in one, ever so exalted, where that recommendation was wanting.

In person she was slim and genteel, about the middle height; with a face rather pleasing than handsome:—fair complexioned, though rather inclining to paleness, with dark eyes, which sparkled with so much intelligence, that they would have served as indexes to trace every variation of her soul. Her countenance betrayed great sensibility, and when the blush of surprise or pleasure mantled on her cheek, she might have been deemed handsome; for she only wanted a little more colour to have rendered her so at all times.

Such was Emily Doraton, the little girl whom Miss Maitland had adopted, and whom she loved, and treated in every respect as her own child:—and as she gazed upon her with an affection truly maternal, would pour forth her thanks to the Almighty, for having bestowed upon her the means to rescue this

amiable being from a fate so unmerited, as must, had her ability not kept pace with her inclination, inevitably have been her lot.

Miss Maitland had written repeatedly to Madame St. Valery ; and had received several letters from her, in return. She had always expressed her wishes as strongly as ever of coming to England, but had never yet been able to get her husband in the mind.

In the last she had written, “ she had expressed her fears, that the time would now be still longer protracted, for, that Monseieur St. Valery had said, the reasons against it were now infinitely stronger, and more multiplied than ever.— There was now so great a difficulty in quitting France, and the Emperor’s prohibitions were so strong against it, that, she believed, she must now give up the idea entirely, and content herself with remaining at Raimondi.

“ Another English neighbour,” continued she, “ who resided in your Château, and with whom I was upon terms of intimacy, has been torn from me, and sent, with her husband and family to Verdun.—Alas ! these are sad times !—but still they are better than those which preceded them.—The French wish for peace ; and so do you in England, I make no doubt.—War, in any point in which it may be contemplated, is terrible !—but Civil War is dreadful !—I hope it may never more rear its baneful head in France !—though we, happily, were out of reach of its worst ravages.—Victorine now resides constantly with us, and sends her best regards to her old friends, Olivia and Emily, and all of you—and I can only say, my dear friend, that if peace should once more extend her olive branch, and visit our several countries, I shall then, as far as it rests with me, gladly avail myself of the opportunity.

and you may then again have a chance of seeing

“ Your much attached friend,

“ ANGELICA ST. VALERY.”

Raimondi,

Oct. 15, 180--.

One day after dinner, as they were sitting at their wine, round the table, a gentleman called in, who, amongst other information, told them of the elopement of a young lady in the neighbourhood, whom they all knew, with her father's footman.

“ Poor Sir Gregory,” exclaimed the gentleman, “ I never saw a man more
“ hurt at any circumstance in my whole
“ life!—I happened to call there this
“ morning, and found the whole family
“ plunged in the deepest distress. Upon
“ enquiring the reason, I learnt, that
“ Miss Susan, the second daughter, had
“ left her father's house that very morn-
“ ing, and was by that time married, for

“ she was more than one and twenty, to
“ Joseph, the footman.”

“ Well !”—cried Henry — “ as the girl
“ has married him, all Sir Gregory has to
“ do, is, to give the fellow a good sum of
“ money, and make a gentleman of him.”

“ That might not be so easy a matter
“ as you seem to think, Henry :” said
his father, seriously.

“ I would do no such thing,”—said
Edward, — “ if I was in Sir Gregory’s
“ place. As she has chosen her own lot,
“ she should abide by the consequences.
“ —As my child, was I her father, I
“ would not suffer her to want ; I would
“ allow her sufficiently to place her above
“ the reach of poverty ; but I would not
“ put her on a par with my other chil-
“ dren, who had never disgraced them-
“ selves, or their connexions. That
“ would be making no distinction be-
“ tween Vice and Virtue — between
“ which, a line should always be distinct-
“ ly kept.—It may seem hard, perhaps,

“ now and then to an individual — but,
“ I am convinced, for the interest of
“ society, that it should be so.”

“ You would be more lenient, than I
“ should be in such a case, Edward,” —
said Lord Vaversly — “ for was a daugh-
“ ter, or any near connexion of mine, so
“ far to disgrace herself, I should, from
“ that moment, give her up for ever. Mar-
“ ry a footman ! — If any young woman
“ of family, who has received an educa-
“ tion suitable to her rank and situation in
“ life, can so far forget herself, as to
“ descend so low, she has no right to
“ expect ever again to be received into
“ respectable society : it would be an
“ insult to any friend or acquaintance
“ who might happen to meet with her. —
“ No ; — she can, in such a case, expect
“ nothing more than a competence in
“ retirement and obscurity.”

“ If she entertains a proper sense of
“ her own misconduct,” observed Emily,
“ I should think she would desire no

“ other :—for, if, even her former con-
“ nexions were to admit her and her
“ husband, (as, of course, being her hus-
“ band, one could not be admitted with-
“ out the other,) how must she blush
“ for the protector she had chosen, every
“ time, even, he opened his mouth.—
“ Ah ! I should imagine, if she thought
“ properly, or had any feeling, she must,
“ herself, wish to retire into the deepest
“ shades of obscurity.”

“ Spoken like yourself, Miss Doraton ;”
—said Edward, warmly—“ but how few
“ young women are there who think
“ like you !”

“ I am one of them, however, I sup-
“ pose, Mr. Edward,” —cried Olivia ;—
“ for, of course, you would not compli-
“ ment Emily, at my expence, before
“ my face.”

“ It was no compliment, Miss Vaversly,
I assure you !”—returned Edward, seri-
ously : “ for had I not really thought so,
“ I should not have said it :”—then ad-

ded, smiling, “ I thought you knew me
“ better.”

“ Worse and worse !”—exclaimed Olivia—“ why, now, I declare, you are
“ downright rude !—Come, Henry, are
“ you asleep ?—Why don’t you take my
“ part ?”

“ O, fight your own battles ;”—said he, carelessly — “ you are well able to
“ take your own part.”

“ I had no such intention, believe me, Miss Vaversly,” returned Edward: “ what
“ I spoke was from the impulse of the
“ moment, and the real sentiments of
“ my heart.”

“ Say no more ;—say no more ;”—said she—“ now you have downright affronted
“ me.”

“ Nay, my dear Miss Vaversly, I am
“ sure you have more sense than to
“ take offence at any thing I have said,
“ and ——.”

“ Aye, but that won’t do ;”—interrupt-
“ ed Olivia—“ I am not to be sugared

“ over with those sweet words : I am not
“ such a simpleton as that, neither.”

“ I see, Miss Vaversly,” said Edward,
“ that I shall not be likely to please you
“ this afternoon, and, therefore, I may as
“ well, I think, take myself off. I pro-
“ mised to call on Farmer Jones, and I
“ may not have another opportunity,
“ perhaps ; so, if the rest of the company
“ will excuse me, I will now take my
“ leave.”

No opposition being made to his departure, he went out of the room for his hat and great-coat, for the weather was excessively cold ;—but soon returned, saying—“ that, if they would give him
“ leave, he would take a few of the ches-
“ nuts in his pocket for the children,” (reaching some at the same time off the table) and then wishing them once more farewell, quitted the room ; and proceeded across the Park, to Farmer Jones’s, in defiance of a piercing north-east wind, which blew directly in his face.

“ He likes a walk better than I should, this bitter cold, bleak afternoon : ” — said Henry — “ but I suppose he had promised the Farmer to call upon him, or some such nonsense — just as if to-morrow would not have done quite as well. — Well ! every one is to do as he likes — for my own part, I know when I am well off. It is not a trifle should take me across the Park this bitter afternoon. ”

“ Edward is slow in promising, you know, Henry, ” said Miss Maitland, “ but strict in performing : — and, I am sure, he would not suffer the weather alone, to prevent him from keeping any appointment, he had, himself, most probably fixed. ”

“ He is too particular by half, I know that, in many things ; ” — retorted Henry — “ — but it is no business of mine : — He is to do as he likes ; and so will I. ”

“ Nay, come, ” said Olivia, “ though he did affront me, I will not have him

“spoken against, in his absence; for upon
“the whole, I really think he is the best
“of any of us.”

“I am happy to hear you say so, my dear
“Miss Vaversly,” said Sir William; “for
“I feared you had taken offence at what
“he said just now, before he left us. But
“you must make allowances. Edward is
“a worthy fellow, though he is a little
“blunt at times, and will now and then
“speak his mind a little too freely,
“perhaps.”

“Why, you did not suppose I was in
“earnest, Sir William—did you?” cried
Olivia. “No; believe me, so far from
“it, I perfectly agree with him in opinion
“—that there are few young women who
“act or think, upon any subject, with
“so much propriety as Emily. I only
“rallied with him for the joke’s sake.—
“Bless you! he knew I was not in
“earnest;—I saw that fast enough. Only
“it served him as a good excuse for

“keeping his appointment with the
“Farmer.”

Emily blushed at these praises; and the stranger again reverting to the imprudent conduct of the young lady, of whom they had been speaking, Olivia said — “She supposed Miss Susan must
“have asked the man to have her; or he
“would never have dared to propose
“marriage to his master’s daughter. She
“must have been a bold girl, though”—
continued she—“and who would have
“thought it! for when she was here, we
“could scarcely get from her a single
“word.”

“You are right, Olivia, I should
“think;—said Miss Maitland—“for I
“can never suppose that any menial ser-
“vant would dare to take improper li-
“berties with the daughter of his master,
“unless she had, previously, conducted
“herself with impropriety, or with, at
“least, unbecoming levity towards him.”

“ You may rely upon it, they would not :”—said Sir William.”

“ I do not know that, Sir,” replied the stranger — “ the young women now-a-days—pardon me, ladies?—the present company, you know are always excepted ; and I really see no impropriety of the nature I allude to, in the ladies of this family :—but the generality of the women now-a-days, I may say old as well as young, dress themselves so openly and indelicately, that it invites impertinence ; and is an incitement to those beneath them to take liberties, which, perhaps, they would not, otherwise, think of doing.”

“ Your observation is very just, Sir ;” observed Miss Maitland—“ the present mode of dress is totally inconsistent with that modesty, which ought to be inseparable from the character of a female. As you say, I am not surprised that such things should happen, whilst young women, (though the

“folly is not exclusively confined to
“them,) attire themselves in a manner,
“which, one would imagine, no woman
“of character would venture to appear
“in.”

“But you would not have them stuck
“out again in hoops; would you?”—
enquired Henry.—“For my part, now,
“I admire the present fashion; so easy!
“so every thing you will!”

“There is a medium;”—replied Miss
Maitland,—“but even hoops, though I
“am no admirer of them, are better than
“the other extreme of no petticoats at
“all.”

“I think the ladies should make more
“distinction in their dress, than they do
“at present”—observed Lord Vaversly.
“The petty Shopkeeper’s daughter, and
“the wife of a Peer, are, in an exact
“similar costume; and are scarcely to
“be distinguished—at least, by their
“dress.”

“And you might have added, Vaversly,”

—resumed Henry—“ that each of the
“ classes you mentioned, and, indeed,
“ every other class, young and old, seem
“ not only to vie with each other, but
“ with, likewise, the professed wanton:
“ for, there is very little difference, now,
“ in the appearance of each.”

“ Now you are too severe, Henry ;”—
cried Olivia.—“ I thought you said, just
“ now, that you admired the present
“ costume of the ladies ?”

“ So I did :”—replied he—“ and so I
“ do : all so free and easy :—but I do not
“ think it a bit the less indelicate for all
“ that.”

“ You are a strange creature !”—re-
torted Olivia—“ and I don’t believe you
“ know what you like, after all. — But,
“ come, Emily, let you and I go and
“ leave these depreciating mortals; and
“ we will be even with them, I warrant
“ them !—with their cocked hats—their
“ hessian boots—and their half a dozen
“ waistcoats to make themselves look

“manly.—O! if they once set me off, I
“could tell them of fifty things, in which
“they are as bad as the women, for the
“life!—but the present company, you
“know, gentlemen,” added she, archly,
“are always excepted:—and so now,
“Emily, we will go and talk this matter
“over by ourselves.”

Miss Maitland, likewise, rising, said—
“she was ready to accompany them,”
and they all three quitted the room together.

CHAP. II.

With me, to be well born, is to be good;
And merit, the pure stream of noble blood.

CHAUCER.

WHEN they reached the drawing-room, Miss Maitland having gone to her own apartment, Olivia rallied her friend upon having drawn forth a compliment from Edward; “the first, she had no doubt, he had ever made.”

“He would not allow it to be a compliment, though, if you recollect,”—said Emily, blushing at her friend’s remark.

“Ho! ho! I cry your mercy!—Madam, “Emily”—exclaimed Olivia, laughing—

“ what, I warrant, you take it for granted, that, as he said so, it was all in earnest.—Well ! I really think, do you know, that you two would make an excellent match :—only, unfortunately, for my scheme, the gentleman has decidedly sworn to be an old bachelor.”

“ And, as he has made such a resolution,” observed Emily, “ you may depend upon it, he will strictly adhere to it.—But, is not that him, yonder, coming along at the further extremity of the Park ? — Yes ; that it is. Kind hearted, considerate Edward ! — How good it was of him to go to Farmer Jones’s this afternoon, when I know he would rather have remained at home, particularly as Mr. Westbury happened to call in, who, I have heard him say, is a great favorite of his ; a man whom he highly esteems.”

“ I often catch you praising him lately,” said Olivia, archly—“ Edward, I

“mean;” said she, nodding significantly.

“And he deserves to be praised!”—
“replied Emily, warmly, — “but, my
“dear Olivia,” added she, seriously, “a
“truce with your raillery, when the gen-
“tlemen come in: for though it is very
“well to joke upon this subject, when by
“ourselves, yet I should be sorry to have
“any thing of the kind mentioned before
“company.”

“Never fear; never fear;” —cried
Olivia—“I will be very tender of the
“secret:—I know very well what I am
“about.—Perhaps, I may have one of
“the same kind myself. But see, here
“is your favourite just coming across the
“lawn; the air has given him such a
“colour, I declare he looks quite hand-
“some.”—Then turning towards Emily,
she said—“why, one would think it had
“given you one, too:—come, why don’t
“you come to the window, and give him
“a nod? and let him see how handsome

“you can look—there’s a good girl; and
“now we shall have him up stairs with
“us, in a minute.”

“Mind now, Olivia,” said Emily,
“not a word of this before the company.”
She had scarcely spoke before Miss Maitland re-entered the drawing-room, and being soon followed by Edward, and the other gentlemen, tea was immediately ordered; and the rest of the evening was devoted to music, in which each of the young people bore a part, either vocal or instrumental.

Lord Vaversly, who was, himself, a constant visitor at the Court of St. James’s, had long wished that his sister should be presented, but it had, hitherto, been delayed by Olivia, on some trivial pretence or other. However, as he had for sometime earnestly pressed it, she agreed to comply with his wishes; and, it was, at length, settled, that the ceremony should take place on the approaching birth-day.

The family, therefore, quitted Melbury for their house in town, long before the usual time of going to London, as many preparations would be necessary upon this important occasion.

Miss Maitland proposed, and wished that Emily should be presented at the same time. But this, Emily herself begged to decline. As she wished rather to shrink from observation, than to court attention—which a novice at St. James's, can scarcely fail to do. And, as she knew not who were her parents, or whether she was even justly entitled to the name of Doraton, she could not endure the thoughts of rendering herself so much an object of curiosity, as such a proceeding, on her part, would most probably give birth to.

Miss Maitland, though she had, at first, warmly pressed it, and had treated these ideas as chimerical, suffered her, at last, to do as she liked:—though Olivia was much disappointed, and felt half in-

clined to retract the promise she had given her brother, and not to go after all, herself.

Against this, however, both Miss Maitland and Emily warmly remonstrated—and she, therefore, at length, agreed to keep to her original resolution, and accompany the former to St. James's, on the appointed day.

When the time arrived, Emily having previously stationed herself in the Privy Chamber at the Palace, by means of a ticket procured for that purpose from the Lord Chamberlain, anxiously awaited the appearance of her friends.

At length they passed through the room, in which she was standing, in their way to the drawing-room, giving her, as agreed upon, only a nod of recognition as they went along. But whether from the flurry—from the coldness of the day—from not being painted, when every other face almost, was literally covered;—or from the change of dress, though

decorated with costly jewels; she thought, that never before had she seen Olivia appear to so great a disadvantage. Instead of envying her situation, or finery, Emily felt for her a degree of pity:—she knew how unpleasant to Olivia had been the idea of this public exhibition of herself and jewels—(for Lord Vaversly had had all the old standards in the family new set, preparatory to this occasion,)—and she could well perceive, as she passed along the Anti-chamber, that she was in no situation to excite envy, but rather the reverse.

In about an hour, however, they returned; and as the trial was now over, the face of Olivia was again brightened by a smile; and she, as well as Miss Maitland, sat down a short time in the chamber, in which Emily had been standing, whilst Lord Vaversly went down stairs to look after the carriages.

They had become almost tired of waiting, when, at length, the agreeable sound

of “ Lord Vaversly’s carriage stops the way,” greeted their ears ; and, as they were not now afraid of being crowded, or of deranging their dress, Emily accompanied them home ; and Miss Maitland’s chariot, which had brought her thither, was sent back empty.

As they rode home, Olivia, who had now recovered her spirits, was full of the scene she had witnessed, but expressed no wish to go again : “ For here,” said she, “ what a trouble we have had to “ dress, and all, as it were for nothing “ after all. Besides, I don’t see any pleasure there is in it. Such staring !—and “ the men !—what figures they had made “ of themselves. If I had not been in such “ a flurry, I should have had a good “ laugh at their expence ; but, as it was, “ the tables were turned—and,—they “ had a laugh at me instead, no doubt.

The carriage now stopping in Park Lane, put an end to her animadversions, and she had no sooner entered the house, than, eager to divest herself of her useless

trappings, she was flying up stairs for that purpose :—but dinner having been waiting for them sometime, was now about to be served up, and she, therefore, delayed this ceremony until the conclusion of their meal.

It was no sooner finished, however, than she and Emily went up stairs together ; where being met by Madeline, she requested permission to have a look at Miss Olivia, before she took off her dress.

“ Well, how do you like it, Madeline ? ” —enquired Olivia, as she good-naturedly turned herself round to shew her the whole of it.

“ Why, its very fine and handsome, “ to be sure, Miss Vaversly ; ” —replied Madeline — “ but, or else, somehow, I “ don’t like it much —for I don’t know “ how it is, but it don’t look natural like. “ Do you think it does, Miss Emily ? ”

“ No ; —not very ; ” — replied Emily, smiling — “ but it is only worn on very

“particular occasions, you know.—But
“you may go down stairs now, and when
“Thomson has dined, send her up.”

Madeline then left the room ; and as they waited some little time, before Thomson, Olivia’s maid, made her appearance, Olivia threw herself into a chair, and said—she never was more fatigued in her whole life.

“For once,” continued she, “I have
“done this, to oblige Arthur ; but he
“must not expect it often : for I have
“been so thoroughly uncomfortable this
“whole day, in my trappings, and my
“finery, that I shall not be very well
“content to undergo the same kind
“of penance often, that I can tell
“him.”

“It is a tax you must pay for being
“nobly born ;” —observed Emily, with a sigh—not of envy, but from the recollection of her own uncertain parentage.

“Pho ! nonsense ! I don’t see the

“ necessity of it. — Arthur lays too much
“ stress upon such things as these by
“ half.—It is very well for those who are
“ obliged to do it ; but as I am not, I
“ do not see why I should put myself to
“ so much inconvenience. The poor
“ Queen and Princesses, now, they are
“ obliged to do it ;—I pitied them, I am
“ sure ; standing there so many hours :—
“ but as I am, fortunately for me, neither
“ a Queen, or a Princess, I do not see
“ why I should be obliged to go there,
“ contrary to my own inclination.”

Thomson now entering the dressing-room, Olivia hastened to divest herself of her superfluous finery ; and being once more attired in her accustomed manner, declared, “ she now felt quite comfortable and like herself again.”

When they descended to the drawing-room, Henry reminded them of an engagement they had made to go with him to the Play this evening :—but, though places had been taken for them at Drury

Lane, yet both Olivia and Miss Maitland were so much fatigued, that they agreed to postpone their visit to the Theatre, until another opportunity. The gentlemen, therefore, went without them; leaving them to the pleasure of enjoying a quiet evening by themselves.

The amiable qualities and good disposition of Emily, had made a deep impression on the heart of Lord Vaversly; her elegance of manner, and propriety of behaviour, being exactly consonant to his ideas of what a woman's conduct ought to be. The more he saw of her, the higher she rose in his estimation, and had she been in a station, upon an equality with himself, he would not have hesitated a moment, in offering her his hand.

But the uncertainty respecting her birth was an insuperable bar to such a proceeding. He could not endure the thought of marrying any woman, however amiable, of whose origin he was

ignorant :—and he, therefore, endeavoured, as much as lay in his power, to chase the subject from his thoughts.

Had she been only deficient in the article of fortune, he would not have suffered that, to have had a moment's weight, —but, to be of obscure birth, was an objection, that could not be got over.

Sometimes, he fancied, she would do honour to any station, or grace any family, however ancient ; — and was half inclined to make her an offer of his hand. But then came the remembrance of his father, and his marriage—how unhappily it had turned out ; merely from that very circumstance of marrying so infinitely beneath him —that he instantly rejected those ideas he had recently formed, and determined to conquer a passion, which it was so inimical to his interest, and to his happiness to indulge.

This, however, he found to be a more difficult matter than he had been aware of ; for whilst he was every day with

her, in contemplation of her many virtues, he found, that instead of erasing her from his mind, her image was implanted there, more deeply and fondly than ever.

Resolutely determined, however, whatever it might cost him, never to make her his wife, he entertained some thoughts of travelling to the Continent, in order to try the effect of absence. He wished to revisit Raimondi ; but as this was no time to visit France, unless he chose to run the hazard of being sent a prisoner to Verdun ; and as his resolution to quit Emily grew every day weaker and weaker ; he was still irresolute—time wore away—and he was still as much enamoured as ever.

He carefully guarded the disclosure of his passion from any one ; and he had hoped that it was yet undiscovered to any :—but his sister, with whom, perhaps, he was less guarded than with others, had perceived many symptoms of

it, and knowing no reason which should prevent it, had no doubt, but, that, eventually, she should see Emily the wife of her brother.

Emily, herself, had no suspicion of this nature whatever. Having been acquainted with him from his early youth, she considered him as a brother, and felt for him a warm fraternal affection, such as the many good qualities he was possessed of, could not fail to inspire in a mind like hers. But as to any attachment on his part, further than a brotherly interest in her favour, she never even so much as suspected ; and, therefore, was constantly adding fuel to his passion, by all those little attentions, which, as a sister, she thought it incumbent on her to perform.

Not many days after the presentation of Olivia, as they were sitting one morning at the breakfast table, Sir William informed Olivia, that when their meal was concluded, he wished to speak to

her, alone, for a few moments in the library, having something of consequence to communicate.

“To me, Sir?”—exclaimed Olivia, with no slight degree of surprise displayed upon her countenance.

“Yes; my dear;—with you:—but I shall not detain you long.”

“Cannot you tell me now, Sir?”—enquired Olivia, who wondered what it possibly could be, that Sir William had to communicate.

“No; my dear Miss Vaversly; what I have to say is for your private ear alone.”

When the breakfast was over, therefore, Olivia accompanied Sir William into the library; where, as soon as they were seated, her Guardian produced a letter from his desk, which, he said, he had recently received, and which nearly concerned herself.

“About what, does it concern me, Sir?”—asked Olivia, who was very

anxious to be informed of what this preamble meant.

“ You shall hear :”—replied Sir William. “ Here is a letter from a man of family, Lord John Lennox, second son of the Duke of that name, who saw you the other day, as he informs me, at St. James’s ; and was so much struck by your appearance, that he offers himself to your acceptance, and requests my permission to allow him to call in Park Lane, in order to solicit your acceptance of his devoirs, and to endeavour to gain your good opinion. What do you say, my dear Miss Vaversly ?—Am I to grant him a favourable answer, and allow him to suppose that his visits will be acceptable ; and, to say, that he may call here when he thinks proper.”

“ O, no, Sir !”—cried Olivia—“ not for the world !—I can have nothing to say to him, I do assure you.”

“ Well, but, my dear — do not you
“ think this is being a little too hasty? —
“ Before we answer this young man, who,
“ you will recollect, is of a very good
“ family, should we not first consult
“ your brother?”

“ O, no ;” — replied Olivia, hastily —
“ indeed there is no occasion, for I can—
“ not marry this young man upon any
“ account ; — upon that subject, Sir Wil-
“ liam, I have already made up my
“ mind.”

“ Have you heard any thing from him
“ before then ?” — enquired her Guardian
— “ or, possibly, you may have been told
“ something to his disadvantage ?”

“ No ; I have not :” — answered Oli-
via — “ but — I do not wish yet to marry —
“ and, therefore, you know, Sir William,
“ that it will be better to inform him so
“ at once.”

“ Certainly : — if you are thus resolute-
“ ly determined. — But, my dear Miss Va-

“versly, I still think it will be proper
“that we should, previously, inform your
“brother.”

“It will be to no purpose, Sir Wil-
“liam”—cried Olivia, “for I never can
“have any thing to say to him. How-
“ever, you are to do as you like;—but I
“must beg that you will tell the gentle-
“man, when you write to him, that I
“must decline his offer, and that this is
“my final answer.”

“But you have not seen him yet,”
observed Sir William, “and know not,
“therefore, whether you would like him
“or not.—Suppose you allow him to pay
“you a visit or two, and then you will be
“better able to judge whether he is likely
“to meet with your approbation.”

“No, indeed;—Sir William,” inter-
rupted Olivia, “he must not come here
“to see me—I can have nothing to say
“to him:—and I think it is quite unne-
“cessary to mention the subject to my

“ brother, as no power on earth could induce me to alter my resolution.”

“ Indeed !”—said Sir William, emphatically—“ then I must own it would be to no purpose. But still I think it is proper that your brother should be informed of Lord John’s proposal, for he might, otherwise, be offended with me, for being silent upon a subject, which, no doubt, he would consider as incumbent upon me to have informed him of.”

“ That is as you please, Sir William,” returned Olivia, “ only I would wish to have it understood, that I cannot give any encouragement to this gentleman. On that subject my mind is completely made up, and no persuasion could induce me to alter it. You will, therefore, at the same time, inform Arthur of my determination.”

“ Certainly, my dear:—but, at the same time, you must give me leave to

“say, that, I think your determination is
“a little premature : without,” added he,
smiling, “there is some other lover in
“the case.”

Olivia blushed at the recollection of Henry, from a secret consciousness, that he was the cause of this decisive rejection of a person whom she had never seen ; and, of course, could, as yet, have no objection to. But she affected to laugh it off, and to assume an appearance of indifference, by saying—that it was no more uncommon that she should wish to be an old-maid, than that his son, Edward, should choose to be an old-bachelor.

Sir William, however, easily saw through this appearance of ease and indifference, and a thought suddenly occurred to him, that Edward was, perhaps, the cause of this sudden rejection of a man, who was of an illustrious family, and whose alliance appeared desirable in every point of view. This idea gave him great pleasure, for no circum-

stance could have been more agreeable to him, or so exactly to his satisfaction, than to have seen his son Edward married to Olivia Vaversly.

His wishes had often pointed that way ; but his son's dislike to marriage had checked any hopes he might have formed—and Olivia's fortune being so large, he had no doubt but she would have suitors plenty, and amongst the many candidates for her favour, it was scarcely possible but that one among them, should succeed in gaining her affections. He had, therefore, given up the point as hopeless, when this circumstance once more awakened his wishes, and he looked forward with hope to some future period, when these wishes might be crowned with success.

Prior, however, to the dismissal of his Lordship, Sir William thought it necessary to apprise Lord Vaversly of his proposal ;—who felt much vexed at his sister's hasty decision ; and said—that he

would speak to her himself upon the subject.

Accordingly, he took an opportunity, when they happened to be left together, at Sir William's, to mention it; and represented, how wrong it was of her, to dismiss so hastily an offer like this, from a branch of a family, ancient and illustrious as was that of the noble Duke, his father. "An alliance," added he, "which appears to me, in every point of view, unexceptionable."

"It is of no consequence to me, my dear Arthur," returned Olivia, "for let the family be ever so ancient and respectable, it is an offer I cannot accept."

"But, what are your reasons, Olivia, for a conduct so strange and unaccountable?—Sure, they are not such, that you would wish to disavow?"

"It matters not what they are;" resumed Olivia,—"suffice it to say, that

“ they are unconquerable, and not to be
“ surmounted.”

“ Sure,”—cried Lord Vaversly, fixing his eyes somewhat sternly upon his sister
“ —sure, you cannot, already, have dis-
“ posed of your affections?”—She blushed
—and he continued—“ You cannot have
“ placed them on one unworthy of you—
“ on one beneath you?”——He trembled as he spoke.

“ No, Arthur,”—said she, solemnly,—
“ that you may rely upon.—Believe me,
“ you never shall have cause to blush for
“ your sister.”

“ To what then am I to attribute this
“ hasty decision concerning the proposal
“ of Lord John Lennox?”

“ Seek not to know the cause, Ar-
“ thur,” said Olivia—“ for it is a ques-
“ tion I cannot answer:—but, depend
“ upon it, it is not from one I should he-
“ sitate to avow, only—I—but, let it be
“ what it will, I think, in a point of

“such moment, I ought to be suffered to
“decide for myself; as I am, certainly,
“the best judge of what will constitute
“my own happiness; and should be ei-
“ther at liberty to receive, or reject, if I
“think proper, any proposal of this na-
“ture, without any animadversions upon
“the matter.”

“You know best, certainly,” said he,
“and I have no wish to influence you, in
“a point where your happiness is alone
“concerned, and where, as you say, you
“are most competent to decide. But,
“before you send Lord John your final
“determination, I would advise you to
“think upon the matter; and, perhaps
“when you have considered it well, you
“may not be inclined to dismiss him so
“hastily.”

“I have determined”—said Olivia,
firmly—“and, therefore, all consideration
“is superfluous.—And pray, brother, let
“the subject be mentioned between us
“no more.”

Emily now entering the room, put an end to a conversation so unpleasant to Olivia,—and the subject, as she had requested, was never introduced by Lord Vaversly again.

He was sorry for her abrupt refusal of an offer, which seemed exactly to have answered his wishes for her; but, as he found her so resolutely determined against it, he resolved never to wound her feelings by a revival of the subject.

Sir William, in consequence, dispatched an answer to his correspondent, informing him of the rejection of his suit on the part of the lady; but endeavoured to word it in as gentle terms as possible, though in a manner, evidently intended to be decisive.

This rejection of a lover so every way unexceptionable, soon spread through the family, and every one conjectured that Olivia must have had some secret motive, which she did not choose to avow. An attachment to another, was the na-

tural conclusion; but who that other could be, was not so easily ascertained. Edward thought she had acted wisely, if she had not an idea that she could be happy with him; and very honourably, for not keeping him one moment in suspense.

Henry, on the contrary, thought, that no girl in her senses would have refused a young man, like Lord John Lennox—a capital match for any girl—(though, in fact, Lord John had only addressed Olivia, from the report of her immense fortune, which had been spread about among the courtly circle at St. James's, on the day of her presentation.) But Henry thought no girl in her senses would have refused him, unless she was attached elsewhere.

Wondering who the object could be, he considered that she visited few families, where there were any young men, likely to attract her attention; and he, therefore, thought it not improbable, but

that the object of attraction was to be found within the precincts of his own family.

That Edward, the solid, serious, sentimental Edward, should attract the notice, much more gain the affections of such a lively girl as Olivia Vaversly, seemed not at all likely :—and not being deficient in vanity, it instantly struck him, that he, himself, might be the object, on whom her affections were placed. The more he thought of this, the more probable it seemed, that such was really the fact.

This idea gaining possession of his mind, he recollected a thousand little occurrences, which, at the time they had happened he had paid no attention to, that put the affair, in his opinion, beyond a doubt ; and wondered how he could be so long blind, to what now appeared to him, so very evident. If this was the case, he thought, as it was always his intention to marry, and as Olivia Vaversly

was a good-natured, agreeable girl enough—he might as well take advantage of her favourable sentiments towards him, and secure her fortune to himself.

For this purpose, therefore, he determined, (to use his own words,) to lay close siege to her, and avail himself of the many opportunities, which a residence in the same house could not fail to give, to secure, and retain her affections; and had no doubt, but ere long, should his surmises have proved true, he should succeed in gaining her consent to become his wife.

Fraught with this idea, he lost no time, but immediately began his plan of operations, by paying her the most unremitting attention. Olivia was astonished—and scarcely knew what to believe. Sometimes she flattered herself that it proceeded from a rising attachment on his part: at others, she wondered how she could be so silly as to be thus deceived. At length, however, he became

more explicit, and she could no longer mistake his meaning—and he in a few days, made her a formal tender of his hand and heart.

Olivia did not attempt to disguise her emotion, or the joy with which this avowal inspired her;—and no long time elapsed before she owned to him, that he, and he alone, had been the cause of her sudden and total rejection of the son of the Duke of Lennox.

Sir William, though he had wished to see Olivia the wife of Edward, yet could not but be pleased with such an alliance for his son, Henry, and, therefore readily accorded his consent. And Lord Vaversly, on being informed how the matter stood, though he thought she might have looked higher, and have chosen a man more steady, and more to be depended upon, than was Henry Maitland—yet finding that on him her affections were ardently and irrevocably placed, did not think proper to withhold his consent; though it was by

no means a match, such as he would, himself, have chosen for her—or one, he feared, which would be likely to afford her much happiness.

Henry and Olivia were now, therefore, declared lovers ; but his attentions did not always keep pace with the ardency of his professions, for he was, at times, careless and indifferent ; and too full of himself, to pay much attention to, or be very solicitous for any one else. He had, however, a warm advocate in the bosom of his intended wife, whom love had so blinded to his failings, that she considered them only as the common failings of every young man of his age, rank, and station in life.

Any little omission or neglect on his part, therefore, was easily got over ; and though she was sometimes offended, yet he was soon restored to favor, and by a more careful behaviour completely re-instated in her good opinion.

Having been long inmates of the same

house, they were perfectly well acquainted with the disposition of each other ; and having obtained the consent of all parties, though some of them yielded it very reluctantly — (these were Miss Maitland and Lord Vaversly, who feared that Henry was not calculated to make Olivia happy) — there seemed no necessity for delay ; and the marriage was settled to take place, as soon as the necessary arrangements and preliminaries were completed : — for both Sir William and Lord Vaversly took care of the interest of Olivia, by having two thirds of her property settled unalienably upon herself, and her children by this marriage.

Her father had left her the sum of fifty thousand pounds, and half of the residue — which, together with a long minority, made her whole fortune, upwards of seventy thousand pounds.

The Lawyers, however, were so dilatory, that the wedding was delayed much beyond the time at first proposed ; — and

though Henry, who was tired of being so long upon his good behaviour, importuned them daily to finish the settlements, he could get nothing from them but promises, that they should be got ready as soon as possible, and excuses for the delay—such as the multiplicity of their affairs—the pressure of business—and the thousand other excuses by which the patience of their clients is so frequently wearied and exhausted.

Edward, in the meantime, passed a considerable portion of his time in reading and reflection, and in going about, like the good Samaritan of old, doing good.—He visited the abodes of poverty, and relieved their distress: many had cause to bless him, who knew not even his name;—for he delighted to perform his good deeds in secret. Though he was a subscriber to most of the public charities, yet they knew not to whom they were indebted, for he never suffered more than his initials to appear.

He associated, familiarly, with very

few of the young men of his acquaintance—their pursuits, for the most part, were so dissimilar to his, that he could find no pleasure in their company. They laughed at him for indulging ideas so contrary to the world in general;—but whilst occupied in a manner congenial to his own feelings, and his own ideas of right, he heeded not what others thought of him—if his own conscience was satisfied, he cared little for the opinions of others.

Between Lord Vaversly and him there existed the most perfect friendship, and they passed much of their time together. A similarity of disposition, and of opinion on most subjects, attached them to each other, and though on some points they differed, it did not interrupt their general harmony; for each had too much sense, to expect to meet in his friend, a person without those failings incident to human nature,

Lord Vaversly sometimes feared that

Edward had penetrated his secret in regard to Emily, for he observed that his friend was frequently warm in her praise—and from him, who was so decidedly an old-bachelor, and so often severe upon the conduct of women, he thought it could proceed from no other motive, than from a wish, perhaps, to signify to his friend, that he honoured, and approved his choice. He, however, never mentioned the subject, therefore, no certain conclusion could be drawn; but Lord Vaversly never heard Edward speak of Emily, without a dread of his coming more immediately to the point; and always endeavoured to change the subject of discourse as soon as he possibly could.

CHAP. III.

Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not
escape calumny.

SHAKESPEARE.

EMILY being indisposed with a cold, had declined accompanying the rest of the family, to a dinner party at the house of an acquaintance, and was, in the evening, quietly sitting alone in her dressing-room, amusing herself in their absence, by reading Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel."

On a sudden, she fancied she heard a great bustle and confusion below stairs; and, listening attentively, was almost certain she heard a scream, apparently

proceeding from the kitchen—or, at least, from some of the rooms appropriated to the servants. Her first idea was, that one of the chimneys was on fire—or, perhaps, the house itself.—She listened again—and went out upon the staircase, that she might hear more distinctly what was going forward.

Nothing, however, appeared, or any sounds heard, likely to realize her fears:—though she could still distinguish a great talking, as if of many voices speaking together; and the noise seemed still to come from the kitchen, or the rooms below.

Anxious to know the real cause of this unusual bustle, in a house generally so quiet as theirs, she again entered the dressing-room, and rang the bell for Madeline, to enquire what was the matter down stairs.

Madeline quickly answered the summons; but appeared so much out of breath, when she opened the door of the

dressiug-room, that she could scarcely articulate sufficiently clear, to ask what her mistress wanted ?

Her face was the colour of crimson, and she trembled so much, that the door shook violently, as she held it in her hand.

“ What is the matter, Madeline ? ” — enquired Emily — “ What has happened to terrify you so, my poor girl ? — Sit down ; — do ; — why you are scarcely able to stand ! ”

“ O ! I shall be better presently, Miss Emily : — but I have had such a tustle below stairs, that I have hardly got over it yet ! ”

“ A what ? ” — cried Emily — “ A tustle, did you say, Madeline ? — that, then, I suppose, was the noise I heard, and by which I was greatly alarmed a few minutes ago ? ”

“ I dare say it was ; ” — answered Madeline — “ but I am sorry you was frightened about it ! — but you must not be

“angry with me, Miss Emily, for it was
“all, every bit of it, about you.”

“About me, Madeline?—What could
“I possibly have to do with it?”

“Why, you shall hear, Miss Emily”—
said Madeline, “if you will give me leave
“to tell you—all about it?”

“Begin then;”—said Emily—“for I
“am somewhat anxious to know, how I
“could be concerned in causing such
“uproar and tumult as I heard down
“stairs?”

“You did though,” cried Madeline,
“I assure you:—for you must know,
“Miss Emily, that Mrs. Dawbwell, my
“Lady Overdo’s woman, who is an ac-
“quaintance—(and very thick indeed
“they are—) of our housekeepers, hap-
“pened to come this afternoon to drink
“tea with her.—So, after tea, when we
“were all sitting round the fire, as com-
“fortable as could be, thinking that
“presently we should have a snug, agree-
“able game at cards, says Mrs. Dawb-

“ well, says she —you must know the
“ reason I picked out this afternoon to
“ pay you a visit, was, because I know
“ your family is all out. Though how
“ she come to know it, I’m sure I can’t
“ tell; but she would fain make people
“ think, as she knows every thing.—How-
“ ever, she knows a great deal more
“ than’s true, that I can tell her!—and
“ I did tell her so too;—and that’s what
“ we quarelled about.”

“ But what have I to do with all this ?’
—enquired Emily.—“ I thought you said,
“ that it was about me this confusion
“ originated ?”

“ Yes, Miss Emily ; and so it was.—
“ For when she said as how the family was
“ all out, it was very natural, you know,
“ of me, to tell her directly that she was
“ mistaken ; for, that you, Miss Emily,
“ was confined at home with a bad
“ cold.”

“ There is nothing much the matter
“ with her, I suppose,” says she—(“ you

“ know, Miss Emily, you desired me to
“ tell you every thing)—there is nothing
“ much the matter with her; only ladies
“ like to have these airs sometimes, and
“ to give people trouble.—Very imperti-
“ nent of her, wasn’t it?”

“ Go on, Madeline;”—said Emily—
but made no other comment.

“ My lady is none of that sort, Mrs.
“ Dawbwell,” says I, “ whatever your
“ may be;—for she did not wish to stay
“ at home herself; and as to trouble, she
“ never gives none she can possibly help
“ —(no more you don’t Miss Emily, I am
“ sure)—only Miss Maitland, my master’s
“ sister, who is as fond of her as if she
“ was her own child, would not hear of
“ her going out, with such a cold and
“ hoarseness as she has got, but begged
“ her to stay at home, and go to bed
“ early;—and so to oblige her she con-
“ sented.—And this was all true, you
“ know, Miss Emily:—but what do you

“ think, the good-for-nothing woman
“ said ?”

“ I don't know, I am sure ;” — said
Emily — “ How is it possible that I should
“ guess ?”

“ No ; that you never would, I am
“ sure !” — cried Madeline. — “ Why then,
“ Miss Emily, she says, says she, — that
“ is nothing at all to be wondered at ;
“ for every body knows, says she, that
“ your young lady is Miss Maitland's
“ own child — O fie ! for shame ! says I,
“ in a very great passion, — (for you
“ know, Miss Emily, well I might be in a
“ rage, at hearing her tell such a wicked
“ story) — O fie ! — for shame ! says I —
“ she is no more Miss Maitland's child
“ than she is yours ; and I wonder how
“ you dares for to go, for to come, for to
“ say so !”

“ Why, how should you know any
“ thing about it, says my lady Paramount
“ — they would hardly tell their secrets
“ to such a girl as you.”

“ Girl !—indeed !”—says I ; “ no more
“ a girl than yourself, if you come to
“ that :—for, I dare say, Miss Emily,
“ she is not yet thirty :—but she looks
“ older, to be sure !—but she paints, they
“ say, so one can’t tell exactly :—and
“ once I heard Jonathan say, I remember,
“ that she would never see fifty again—
“ but, he must be out of his reckoning
“ there, for she is not so much as that, I
“ know.”

“ It was a pity you took any notice of
“ what she said,” observed Emily, “ for it
“ was a matter of no consequence, and
“ not worthy even of a reply.”

“ O dear ! Miss Emily, I can’t think
“ that, though.—What, do you think I
“ could sit tamely by, and hear you called
“ a base-begotten child, and that good
“ woman, Miss Maitland, made out no
“ a better than she should be ! — No—I
“ could not have done it, if I had been
“ hung for it, the next minute !”

“ You are a good girl, Madeline,” cried

Emily, with some emotion, “and I thank
“you for your warm interest in my fa-
“vour: but, another time, do not suffer
“your resentment to get the better of
“your prudence—but be silent—for it is
“not worth while to answer such ridicu-
“lous assertions.”

“I could not hold my tongue, Miss
“Emily, if I heard you spoken of disre-
“spectfully, no, not if I was to die for
“it!—and so, I determined to up and
“tell her my mind pretty freely.—Says
“I—you must be bad yourself, says I
“—to say such things, or even think
“of them, about such kind, good-heart-
“ed, worthy ladies as mine are—and I
“no more believe as Miss Maitland,
“my master’s sister, ever had a child,
“than I do that I’ve had one my-
“self.”

“And you may, for what I know,—
“says this provoking, good-for-nothing
“creature, with such a sneer! Miss Emi-
“ly, that there was no bearing of it: and

“ I must own it put me in a very great
“ passion—How dare you say so! says
“ I—you wicked woman!—for I was
“ ready to burst with rage.—If you only
“ say such a word again, making me
“ out a vile creature, I’ll box your ears
“ for you, that you may depend upon!”

“ That was wrong, Madeline,” said
Emily;—“ very wrong—but I hope you
“ had more command over yourself than
“ to commit such an act of impropriety,
“ as that of putting your threats into
“ execution.”

“ No, indeed, I had not, Miss Emily;
“ though I know it was very wrong: but
“ she provoked me so, that I hardly
“ knew what I was doing: for, if you
“ will believe it, she laughed outright—
“ and then drawing herself up, as if she
“ was the Queen, asked me, in a domi-
“ neering tone—if I knew who I was
“ talking to?”

“ Yes; to be sure I do, says I; to

“a poor servant like myself,—for what
“is she else, you know, Miss Emily?”—

“With that, she flew into such a passion, and told me, if she had any more
“of my impertinence, she would turn me
“out of the room, into my proper place,
“the kitchen.—That’s more than you
“dare do,—said I—for, to let you
“know, you are no mistress here.—
“You shall see what I dare do, however, says she; and so up she got,
“and was absolutely seizing hold of my
“arm, to push me out of the door,
“when I turned round, and give her as
“good a box of the ear, as ever she had
“in her life.—She’ll remember turning
“me out of any place again, I’ll warrant her!”

“O, for shame! Madeline”—cried Emily—“I am sorry you conducted
“yourself so improperly.”

“Why, what was I to do, Miss Emily?
“—Was I to let her turn me out, without
“speaking a word about it?—No—I am

“ sure you would not advise me to have
“ done that.—So then, up flew Jonathan
“ to part us, for else she was going to
“ strike me again; only I gave a loud
“ scream, and got away from her.—So
“ then, down she sat; and said—how ill
“ I had used her: but then, you know,
“ Miss Emily, why did she begin first?
“ —calling every body names, and mak-
“ ing us all out no better than we should
“ be.”

“ I am sorry to find, Madeline,” said Emily, very seriously, “ that you had no
“ more command of temper:—for should
“ this affair come to the knowledge of
“ either Sir William or Miss Maitland, it
“ might, perhaps, occasion your dismissal
“ from the family—for, I am sure, they
“ would be extremely angry to hear that
“ such a riot and disturbance had been
“ raised in the house during their ab-
“ sence.”

“ O, Miss Emily!—but you don’t think
“ they would turn me away—do you?”—

cried Madeline, whilst the tears started in her eyes.—“ O, dear!—O, dear!—
“ what would become of me, if such a
“ shocking thing as that was to happen?
“ — This good-for-nothing woman!—
“ what troubles she may bring me into!
“ —I wish to my heart she had been at
“ the bottom of the sea, or on it, for that’s
“ bad enough! before she had come here
“ with her stories, and impertinence, to
“ get me turned out of my place.”—And she wept bitterly.

“ I hope they never will hear of it;” said Emily, pitying the distress she had raised in the bosom of Madeline—“ I
“ hope they never will hear of it!—for I
“ should be sorry if such an idle tale was
“ ever to reach the ears of Miss Maitland.—Pray, is the woman down stairs
“ now?”

“ Yes, Miss Emily;—but she talked of
“ going—and I wish, to my heart, she
“ would take herself off!”

In order to preserve the peace, Emily

contrived to detain Madeline, till the hour of supper; when, supposing Mrs. Dawbwell would be gone, she ventured to send her down stairs for some gruel, which she had previously ordered to be prepared. The lady was, happily, departed; and Emily, therefore, having drank the gruel, speedily dismissed Madeline, without any dread of further disturbance; though not without a strict caution, to be more guarded in her conduct for the future.

Emily, having retired early to bed, in compliance with the earnest desire of Miss Maitland, found it impossible to sleep, being so much before her usual time of going to rest. She had, therefore, ample leisure for reflection, and her ideas wandered to a subject, which was ever uppermost in her thoughts—the uncertainty she was in respecting the authors of her being.

As this subject pressed upon her mind, she recollected her late discourse with

Madeline, and the assertion of Lady Overdo's woman, that she was the child of Miss Maitland. — "Perhaps," said she, mentally, "I really am : " — but the next moment she rejected the idea ; and blamed herself severely, for suffering a thought so injurious to the fair fame of Miss Maitland, to enter her mind. — Ah ! no — thought she — it is not so ; — but yet, she constantly behaves towards me with the affection of a mother. — Ah ! would she were so in reality ! — yet, does not she do so, likewise, towards Olivia ? — and do I not recollect my first meeting with her : and have, also, some faint remembrance of the poor woman, with whom I resided, previous to our, for me, fortunate voyage ? — Ah ! too surely I do : — and how then, can I, for a moment, seriously entertain such a thought ! — and one, so injurious, too, to the warm-hearted, benevolent being, who so generously, and so kindly protected me.

Still the idea dwelt upon her mind ;

and all her endeavours to chase it from her thoughts proved ineffectual ; till, at length, wearied nature yielded her a respite, from the harassing and contradictory ideas that tormented her, by sinking her into a profound sleep.

It was late when Miss Maitland returned ; and hearing from Madeline, that Emily had fulfilled her wishes, and gone early to bed, hoped, that by this time, she was gone to sleep ; and fearing to disturb her, did not go to her room, as had been her original intention, but immediately retired to her own apartment.

The next morning, as Emily was much better, though still rather hoarse, she went down to breakfast with the family ; and Miss Maitland, thinking a ride would be of service to her, proposed an airing as far as Clapham, to pay a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Watkins.

This was readily agreed to, by Emily

and Olivia. The carriage was, therefore, ordered, and immediately after breakfast they set off—knowing Mr. Watkins was an early man, and liked to dine at a particular hour.

They were sure of receiving a hearty welcome, at any hour;—but, as he made no scruple of telling his friends, that he had a great aversion to any one coming in at dinner, unless they would sit down and take a bit with him; and, as he dined much before the usual hour of people in general; Miss Maitland always contrived to pay her visits early, that they might not interfere with his comfort, or domestic arrangements.

They soon arrived at his house, which was pleasantly situated on the Common; where they were cordially welcomed, by both Mr. and Mrs. Watkins;—though the former said—“they did not visit him half so often as he wished them to do.—You should recollect,” said he,

“ what a poor lame fellow I am, and
“ come, at least, two or three times a
“ week, if its only out of pure charity.”

Miss Maitland said—“ that as he was
“ such an invalid, she feared they might
“ be troublesome, if they came so often.”

“ Pho!—nonsense!—don’t take that
“ in your head.—I am always glad to
“ see you, and these girls here at any
“ time.—I am neither sick nor sorry,
“ you know ; I’m only tied by the leg,
“ and so I’m glad to have a person call
“ in, now and then, and tell me a bit
“ of news. If it was not for that, and
“ a newspaper now and then, I should
“ not know how the world wags, or the
“ price of stocks, or any thing.”

“ We will come oftener then, uncle,
“ for the future” — said Olivia ; “ for if
“ you cannot go out, we ought to take
“ pity on you, I am sure !”

“ Mind you do then ; and be sure you
“ don’t forget it ; for you girls are very

“ apt to promise more than you perform.”

“ That is not the case with me, uncle ;”—returned Olivia—“ for I——.”

Here a loud rap at the door announced a visitor ; and Mr. Watkins, listening, said, “ he wondered who it could be so early :”—but hearing a voice in the passage below, enquiring whether he should find his master up, he soon recognised the well known tones of an old acquaintance, and told the ladies, it was only an old friend of his, who often came to chat with him for an hour or two, and bring him a little news from ’Change.

A heavy footstep was now heard ascending the stairs, and the door being thrown open, the servant announced Sir Richard Jobson :—who had no sooner entered the room, than he started back and said—“ He begged pardon for his intrusion, but hoped they would excuse him, as he did not know they had

“ company — especially so many nice
“ ladies, or he should not have come
“ up.”

“ Sit down, Sir Richard ; ” — cried Mr.
Watkins — “ and make no more ceremony
“ — you know I hate it ! — Sit down, I
“ say ; it’s only my neice, as you’ve
“ heard me talk about, my sister’s daugh-
“ ter. — There, I’ll introduce you. — That’s
“ Olivia — pointing to her as he spoke ; —
“ and that other young lady, next her,
“ is Miss Doraton, or Emily, as she is
“ most usually called : are you not, my
“ dear ? ”

Emily, smiling, gave a nod of assent,
and he continued — “ That lady, talking
“ to my mother, is Miss Maitland ; and
“ there, now, I believe, I’ve told you all
“ their names.”

“ How do you do, ladies ? ” — said Sir
Richard, bowing — “ I hope I see you all
“ very well ? — my name’s Sir Richard
“ Jobson ; and now I hope we shall all
“ soon be better acquainted. — But, dear

“me? Ma’am,”—continued he, address-
“ing Miss Maitland, “sure I have some-
“where seen your face before! though,
“I declare now, for the life of me, I
“can’t tell where?”

“Yes; I believe Sir”—said Miss Mait-
land, with a smile at the recollection of
their former meeting—“you and I have
“chanced to meet before. At Rome it
“was, if I recollect right, some years
“ago.”

“Dear heart! Ma’am, so it was.—O!
“now I recollect the circumstance very
“well.—You was the lady who was with
“his Lordship, when he was so cracky
“after the pictures.—O! now I remem-
“ber it all as well as if it was yesterday.
“It was when I was fool enough to go
“to Italy,” added he, turning to Mr.
Watkins; “some years ago, don’t you
“remember it?”

“O! very well; very well. When
“your daughter was in that bad way?”

“You are right, neighbour; that was

“ the very time: — and we all met together at that there Rome, you know.”

“ Pray, Sir, how is the young lady?” — enquired Miss Maitland — “ did she receive any benefit from the change of climate?”

“ Lord love ye! yes. — She was quite another creature, and as merry and as plump as a dairy-maid. — Soon after we came back again, you must know, she got herself a husband, and ever since has been as hearty and as healthy! and is now the mother of four children, as pretty little creatures as you shall see, and as like their mother as two peas!”

“ I am happy to hear it, Sir;” — said Miss Maitland; “ for she looked very poorly, and, as I thought, consumptive, when I had the pleasure of seeing her at Rome.”

“ She did so, indeed Ma’am;” — cried Sir Richard — “ I thought I should have lost her; and that would have gone

“ nigh to break my heart !—but matrimony, matrimony, Ma’am—that did the business :—there’s nothing like it : —do you think there is, neighbour ?”

“ I don’t know, Sir Richard ;” replied Mr. Watkins, mournfully. — “ A young woman, now-a-days, runs so much risk by marrying, that I am not clear whether she does not stand a better chance for happiness, by remaining single.”

“ Pho! nonsense! neighbour—I thought you knew better :—do you think any girl yet ever fancied herself happy till she was married ?”

“ I do not see any reason why they should not ;” —observed Mrs. Watkins: “ for my own part, Sir Richard, I think if women knew when they were well off, they would never marry at all.”

“ Why, one would think,” retorted the Knight, “ that you were all a parcel of old-maids, and old-bachelors, to hear you talk in this manner.—Pray,

“ Ma’am,” added he, addressing himself to Miss Maitland—“ what do you think of it ?—is this, likewise, your opinion ?”

“ Why, Sir,”—replied she, smiling—“ I do not know that I am competent to decide, which of the two states are preferable, the married or the single. I can, therefore, only say, that I should think few wives enjoy greater happiness, than I do, who have never quitted the single state, but am, as you just now said, an old-maid.”

“ O, dear ! Miss” — said he — “ I beg your pardon ; — I forgot as there was e’er a one in company—but I hope you won’t think it no offence ?—To be sure, if a man chances to get a scolding wife, or a nagger, it is the deuce and all ! — and there is a pretty many of them there sort about, I do believe.”

“ Or, if a woman,” retorted Olivia, “ was to meet with a husband, who gets tipsy ; or, a Patroniser of Boxers ;—or one, who spends all his own, and his

“ wife’s money, at Elections ;— for I
“ think either of these is as bad, as even
“ a scold, or a nagger, whatever you
“ mean by that, Sir ; for I really do not
“ exactly understand, what kind of dis-
“ position that is ? ”

“ Then you have never lived in a
“ house with one, Miss, I can tell ;—
“ more’s your good luck !— for, else,
“ they’d soon let you know what nagging
“ means. — Why, it’s never letting you
“ be quiet, even for a moment ; always
“ at you, about one thing or other ;— ne-
“ ver letting you enjoy yourself a minute.
“ — I know very well what it is ; for I
“ had a wife of this description. — Poor
“ woman !— She’s dead and gone now ;—
“ but whilst she lived, I never knew
“ what peace or comfort was : — always
“ rating either at me, or the maid. — Her
“ tongue was never quiet, but when she
“ was asleep — and hardly then neither :
“ — in short, she was never thoroughly
“ silent, till she was in her coffin.”

“Which, I should think, you could not be very sorry for:”—observed Mr. Watkins—“though the loss of a good wife,” added he, mournfully, “is one of the most severe afflictions, that human nature can undergo.”

“But you was more unlucky than usual, Sir, I should imagine?”—said Olivia.

“No, Miss; no;—it is, I am afraid, a too common case.—There was your papa, Miss, to be sure he was not a woman you will say—but, for all that, he was very cross-grained, and disagreeable like. — Don’t you remember, Ma’am,” continued he, addressing Miss Maitland, “how he used to snap up my Lady? nay, for the matter of that, so he did every body else.—But, dear heart! I had like to have forgot to ask you—pray—you was a going on to that there Naples, you know, where was that horrid burying mountain—was it true what I heard about you, that you

“ had liked all of you to have been swallowed up ? ”

“ There was a slight shock of an earthquake, Sir,” replied Miss Maitland, “ and a most violent eruption of Mount Vesuvius, by which our safety was much endangered ; but, happily, we escaped without injury, though we suffered seriously from the fright.”

“ I persuaded you not to go, you know ; but you would not take my advice :—why, somebody told me, that the hot coals flew about your heads like so many hail-stones—but, somehow, I could not believe that, for, if that had been the case, why, dear heart ! you must have been scorched to death ! ”

“ It was the death of my poor sister ! ” —said Mr. Watkins. whilst the tears started in his eyes—“ she never got over it.”—Here his voice faltered.—“ But, you’ll oblige me, Sir Richard,” continued he, “ after a pause—“ if you won’t mention the subject any more—it al-

“ways takes away my spirits;—I never
“love to think of it.”

The revival of this subject, likewise, never failed to introduce a train of melancholy reflections in the bosom of Miss Maitland, which rendered her unfit for conversation: and, observing, that Mr. Watkins seemed affected in a similar way, she arose to depart, and wishing them good morning, promised to take the earliest opportunity of calling again—and then, followed by her young companions, left the room, and returned to Park Lane.

CHAP. IV.

I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments,
And Virtue has no tongue to check her pride.

MILTON.

WHEN the family were assembled after dinner, the young men having been a few evenings before to the theatre, to see the new comedy of John Bull, the conversation happened to turn upon the merits of it. Edward was of opinion, that the play was altogether a good one, such as might be expected from a man of genius; though, in point of moral, it was certainly defective. The character of Mary, was not at all, he thought, (as re-

presented by Mrs. Gibbs,) the simple character, which the author, most probably, intended to convey; or, as entitled to that lenity, (after the imprudent, not to say criminal conduct, she was guilty of) which is shewn her at the conclusion of the piece.

“ Really, you are enough to make any
“ one laugh, Edward, at your quizzical
“ notions ;”—said his brother.—“ For my
“ part, I was never more pleased with a
“ performance in my life :—but I never
“ regarded the moral—not I !—as long
“ as it pleased me, that was all I cared
“ for.”

“ What crime then, does the heroine
“ commit Edward”—enquired Miss Maitland—“ that you think she is too leniently treated ?”

“ First, she becomes an easy prey to
“ her seducer; and then quits her father’s house—leaves a parent who idol-

“ ized her, and whose whole happiness
“ was centred in his child ! never, as she
“ then imagined, to see him more.—Yet,
“ in the end,” continued Edward, warmly,
“ she is rewarded by marrying her
“ seducer—and, held up, through the
“ whole play, as an object interesting,
“ and entitled to our pity, when she
“ ought rather to be exhibited, as an ob-
“ ject of detestation, as an imprudent,
“ ungrateful, disobedient daughter.”

“ We must see this play, Edward—
said Miss Maitland, “ for you have raised
“ my curiosity very much : and, there-
“ fore, the next time it is acted, secure
“ places for us ; will you ? and mind,
“ now, I shall expect you will be our
“ escort.

“ O ! we will all go ;”—said Henry—
“ for I should like very well to see it
“ again, and have another laugh at Den-
“ nis Brulgruddery, and the red cow.—
“ A fig for the moral ! say I—we go to

“ the play to be amused, and don’t expect to find a sermon in a comedy like this.”

“ But it is as well to be amused, and instructed at the same time : do not you think it is ? ” — asked Emily.

“ Why, as to that, Miss Doraton,” replied he, carelessly, “ I never look for instruction at a playhouse : — my only motive for going there is diversion ; and if I do but find it, my end is answered, and I seek no farther.”

“ Yes ; ” said Olivia — “ but Shakespeare, you know, informs us, Henry, that we may find — sermons in stones — books in the running brooks — and good in every thing. — I don’t know whether I say it right ; I rather believe not ; but, I suppose, he means to say — that instruction may be gained from every circumstance, by those who look for it, and wish to receive it.”

“ Come, don’t you turn preacher, Olivia,” cried Henry — “ for that will ne-

“ver do :—however, I shall soon find a
“method of stopping you ; so mind,
“now, I give you warning.”

A playful altercation now took place between the lovers ; and the party soon after separated, till the hour of tea, when they once more assembled in the drawing-room, with the exception of Edward—who was gone to spend an hour or two with Lord Vaversly, in Grosvenor Square.

Edward, ever attentive to their wishes, had provided places for them at the Theatre, on the very next evening, that John Bull was to be performed ; and accompanied the females, himself, to the situation he had selected for them, in the lower tier, being the third box from the stage. Henry also, promised to join them early in the evening ; but Sir William, having seen the play before, begged to be excused, as they would have so good an escort, as his son, Edward.

The females took their seats in front ; and Edward stationed himself behind

them ; reserving also a place for Henry, whom he expected every moment would make his appearance.

The play began ;—and Dennis Brulgruddery, and Dan, the waiter, looking out for a customer, caused them many a hearty laugh, when the box-door next to theirs was thrown open, to admit the company who had taken seats in it, and —Lady Mortimer's places—was loudly vociferated by the box-keeper, who stood bowing to them as they entered.

The eyes of all the Maitland party were naturally directed to the box next them, but Miss Maitland no sooner cast a look that way, than she turned as pale as death, and seemed ready to sink upon the ground.

“ What is the matter, my dear Ma-
“ dam ? ” —enquired Emily, much alarmed
—“ you are surely very ill ? —the heat of
“ the house has overcome you. —I dare
“ say Mr. Edward could procure you a
“ glass of water.”

“Never mind—my dear”—said Miss Maitland, sighing deeply—“I shall be “better presently.”

Emily, however, perceiving that she grew still paler, and trembled violently, turned round suddenly, to speak to Edward, and request him to fetch his aunt a glass of water; when she saw him just going out of the box-door, and as she caught a view of his countenance, there seemed an expression on it, very unusual, and one which she could not define. It was not anger, nor it was not sorrow, but appeared a mixture of both, mingled with grief. She called after him; but he heeded her not.—She, however, supposing that having noticed the illness of his aunt, he was gone for some refreshment, momentarily expected him to re-appear—and, turning again to Miss Maitland, bestowed upon her, her whole attention.

As Emily sat in the middle, between Miss Maitland and Olivia, the former of whom sat with her back against the next

box, the face of Emily, who was now busily employed in fanning, and watching the countenance of her benefactress, was necessarily turned towards the party it contained.

Every now and then, her anxious glances were directed to their own box-door, through which Edward had departed, in the hope of seeing him re-enter:—but still he came not:—and she was so taken up, with the increasing indisposition of Miss Maitland, that she had not leisure to observe, how intently the eyes of one of the ladies, in the next box, were fixed upon her face.

Olivia, however, could not fail to observe it, and whisperingly asked Emily, “Whether she knew her?”

“No;”—replied Emily, for the first time regarding her—but her attention being wholly directed towards Miss Maitland, she had no time to bestow upon any other object, and only said—“O! do look round the House, Olivia, and

“see if you can perceive any thing of
“Edward!—Where he can be, I cannot
“think!”

“He should not have left us!”—said Miss Maitland, with yet increasing languor—“but yet, poor fellow! I cannot
“wonder at it!—Oh! what would I give
“if we were all at home!”

“My dear Madam,” said Emily, anxiously—“what shall we do?—I am sure
“you will not be able to sit up much
“longer.”

“Henry will be here presently.” said Miss Maitland, faintly—“and then we’ll
“go.”

“He will not be many minutes, now,”
—cried Olivia—“I dare answer for him.”

Emily cast an anxious glance round the boxes, in hopes of perceiving one of the young men, in some other part of the house; but her wishes were vain; she could see neither of them;—and the conduct of Edward, in particular, so different from his usual mode of behaviour,

appeared to her very strange, and for which she could not in any way account.

In the mean time, the lady who had been so intently gazing upon the countenance of Emily, but, who, as Olivia observed, turned her head away, whenever the eye of Miss Maitland encountered her's, had beckoned to a gentleman of the party, who sat in the back part of the box, and made signs to him, to look at the object, who had attracted her own attention. — The gentleman, however, had no sooner cast his eyes that way, than his face was suddenly overclouded, and, as if struck by some sudden recollection, hastily quitted the box.

Still Edward did not return; and Henry came not; and, Emily, fearing that if they delayed much longer, Miss Maitland would faint quite away, proposed to go herself into the lobby, and request one of the fruit-women to procure for her a glass of water.

Miss Maitland was too much overcome by faintness and langour, to prevent her, and she was rising for that purpose, when she had the joy and satisfaction of seeing Henry enter the box; but before she could speak to him, he said — “Why, how is this! — What, are you all here by yourselves? — Where is Edward?” — Then glancing a look towards the next box, the company of which, naturally turned their heads round, on hearing some one speaking, he suddenly changed colour, first turning pale, and then very red, and, with an appearance of sadness very unusual, said to Miss Maitland — “I think we had better go home, aunt; this is no longer a place for us.”

“Willingly;” — answered Miss Maitland, as well as she was able to articulate: — and at the same moment, arose for the purpose of leaving the box.

“But what shall we do about your brother?” — said Emily — “Had not some of us better stay here till he re-

“turns? for, otherwise, perhaps, when
“he comes back again, he may be alarm-
“ed at finding us all gone.”

“There is no necessity for that;”—
returned Henry—“he will not enter this
“box again — that, I am positive!—I
“know Edward too well for that!—
“So, come, let us go directly, will
“you?”

He now, for the first time, perceived the weak and languid condition of his aunt, whose eagerness to leave her present station far exceeded her ability—for she still trembled so violently, that it was with the utmost difficulty, even with the aid of his support, that she contrived to reach the box-door.

They, however, at length gained the lobby, where, being less warm than in the Theatre, she felt somewhat revived; and resisting their wishes for her to sit down, whilst Henry went to fetch the water, she said—she was sure she should be able to reach the anti-room, where the com-

pany usually waited for their carriages. There it would be still cooler, and she could sit down on one of the sofas, whilst he went to see if their own was ready to draw up.

Before they quitted the box, Emily threw her eyes around the Theatre, to see if Edward was any where visible; but no traces of him could be discovered; and she, at length, followed Miss Maitland, who, with Henry and Olivia, was a few paces before her.

Henry, who appeared particularly solicitous about his aunt, now apologized to Olivia, for not being able to attend to her as he could wish; and said—he thought she had better take hold of the arm of Emily, and keep as close as possible behind them. “Never mind me,” cried she, “attend wholly to Miss Maitland, I am sure she needs all the support you can give her:”—at the same time, stepping back, and passing her hand through the arm of Emily.

As they passed a flight of stairs, which led to the upper tier of boxes, their attention was directed to a person who was standing, apparently in a state of total abstraction, with his elbow on the edge of the bannister, at the foot of the staircase, whilst his hand supported his head.

They could not see his face, it being entirely hidden by his hand; but Emily observed to Olivia, as they followed close behind Miss Maitland and Henry—(who was so occupied in attending to his companion, that he had not noticed this person, though he had just passed him)—that she fancied that gentleman was very ill.

“Poor man!”—said Olivia—“he seems so, indeed!—sure, somebody ought to go to his assistance.”

“I have a great mind to speak to him, myself,”—returned Emily—“only, perhaps, it might be construed improperly—yet, possibly, no one has ob-

“served him but ourselves, and it is
“dreadful to let a fellow-creature suffer,
“for the sake of a little punctilio.”

Whilst they were deliberating whether or not they should speak to this gentleman themselves, or call to Henry, to solicit him to ask, if they could afford him any assistance, he suddenly raised his head, and they in a moment perceived it was Edward.

Emily was no longer silent——“Are
“you not well, Mr. Edward?” enquired she, tenderly—“I fear indisposition has
“prevented your returning to us?—
“We have been quite uneasy at your absence.”

“No,—Miss Doraton,”—answered he, with a countenance on which sadness was strongly depicted—“it was not
“that:—I thank you for your solicitude:
“—but it was not indisposition that prevented me from returning.—But, how
“is it that I see you here alone?—Where

“is my aunt?”——said he, sighing deeply.

“She is on before, with your brother Henry.—But, surely, Mr. Edward, you are not well?—your looks speak too plainly of indisposition, to be misunderstood?”

“No;”—said he, “believe me, it is nothing;—a slight agitation only—but it is going off.” Whilst he said this, he put an arm of each of his companions within his own, and followed Miss Maitland and Henry along the passage, leading to the anti-room.

As they went, Olivia observed, that this had been an unlucky evening; “for there,” continued she, “you have been ill; and poor Miss Maitland has been very near fainting away.”

“My aunt has been indisposed then, has she?”—enquired Edward, quickly, but with a deep sigh—“Alas!—it is not to be wondered at!”

“She is very ill now;”—resumed Olivia—“and that is the reason we are going home so soon; so we must defer seeing Dennis and Dan, or giving our opinions about the character of Mary, till another time. I cannot think what could make her so ill—there is nothing so affecting in what we have seen of the play, nor was the house so very warm. I cannot think what could occasion it; or indeed, what is come to you all!—for, you look like a ghost; and Emily here, since we came into the lobby, don’t look much better; and Henry’s countenance, I declare, at one time, quite frightened me!”

Edward answered only by another deep-drawn sigh, that drew a responsive one from the heart of Emily—though she was quite at a loss to account for his extreme depression, or his seemingly unaccountable conduct.

On reaching the anti-room, they found Miss Maitland seated upon one of the

sofa's, and Henry standing by her side waiting only for them, that he might not leave her alone, before he went to see after the carriage. "Why, what a time
"you are coming along!"—cried he, as soon as he saw them—"and Edward, too
"—where did you meet with him?—I
"saw he was with you, when I looked
"back after you, or I should have called
"out to you, to come on a little faster:
"—as he was with you, it was of no
"consequence."

"You are a pretty gentleman," retorted Olivia, "to look after your friends,
"why you passed your brother as you
"went along, and never noticed him."

"Where was he, then?"—enquired Henry—"but without waiting for an
"answer, he desired them to sit down
"for a few minutes, whilst he went to
"see after the carriage."

Emily now enquired of Miss Maitland, tenderly, "how she found herself?"—
who answered, "that she was much bet-

“ter:”—but Emily instantly discovered, by the tone of voice in which she spoke, that she either was then, or had been weeping—and, judging, if that was the case, it was the most salutary circumstance, that, at present, could possibly happen to her, she forbore to interrupt her, by asking any further questions: but seated herself at the other end of the sofa, pensively watching the countenance of Edward, who had thrown himself upon one of the seats, on the opposite side of the room.

No one spoke.—Olivia was sitting with her eyes fixed on the door, which led out of the house, and through which Henry had disappeared, in momentary expectation of seeing him return.—At last, she exclaimed—“Here he comes!”—which caused every one of them to turn their eyes towards the door at the entrance—at which a gentleman appeared, (for it was not Henry) who had no sooner cast his eyes on the party there

assembled, than he started, and instantly retreated. Instead of advancing, to go through the room, as had evidently been his intention, he went back quickly the way he came.

His appearance had an instantaneous effect upon the whole party. Edward started up, hastily :—and Miss Maitland, uttering a faint scream, sunk senseless upon the sofa. Her agitated spirits seemed now entirely subdued, and she was totally bereft of animation.

Emily, who was herself in the greatest trepidation, applied some salvolatile to the nostrils and temples of her more than mother ; and Olivia endeavoured to give her all the air she possibly could, by opening the doors as wide as they would go, and fanning her as well as she could, with a fan she had brought with her to the Theatre, but which, unluckily, was so fashionably small, as to be of very little use.

Miss Maitland, however, began to re-

vive, though very slowly, and Edward was preparing, if she got no better, to take her in his arms, and carry her to the outer door of the Theatre, where the fresh air, he thought, would be likely to restore her, and where, he had no doubt, but, that by this time, he should find the carriage, though Henry was not yet returned.

Almost the next moment, however, he made his appearance; and, instead of expressing any surprise at the state in which he found them, said—"I expected something of this kind, when I met the rascal on the stairs:—It is devilish unlucky that we should happen to come here to night."

"It is to no purpose to regret it now"—said Edward, in a desponding tone of voice—"our first care must be to get my aunt safely seated in the carriage."

Miss Maitland, however, who was now beginning to recover, professed her-

self able, with their assistance, as the distance was so short, to walk to the carriage; and taking, therefore, an arm of each of the young men, whilst Emily and Olivia followed close behind, she contrived, though very slowly, to reach the outer door, where it was stationed: into which, to her great relief, she was in a few moments placed.

The young people stept in after her; and the coachman was ordered to drive home as expeditiously as possible.

The fresh air blowing coolly in at the windows, was of essential service to Miss Maitland, who, in a short time was greatly relieved from the faintness and languor, which had been so oppressive to her; and able to raise her head from the shoulder of Edward, on which it had been hitherto resting.

As no one seemed inclined to speak, a general silence prevailed, till they turned round the corner from Piccadilly into Park Lane; when it was broken by

Henry, who said—"Though it will be
" necessary to account to my father, for
" our returning so early, so much sooner
" than he has any reason to expect us,
" yet, I think, it will be as well, not to
" enter into particulars with him; but
" merely to say, that the indisposition of
" my aunt obliged us to leave the
" Theatre, almost as soon as the play
" began."

"You are right, Henry,"—said Miss Maitland, faintly,— "it is unnecessary to
" distress him any further."

Edward said not a word.

At length the carriage stopt at Sir William Maitland's; and when they entered the drawing-room, where he was seated alone, he was much surprised, and not a little alarmed at their appearance. His sister's indisposition, however, which was but too apparent, easily accounted for their hasty return, and he thought no further of the matter.

Miss Maitland soon retired to her own

apartment, whither she was accompanied by Olivia and Emily; who did not, however, remain with her long, as she wished to be alone, or at least, with only Susan; and they, therefore, having bid her good-night, returned almost immediately to the drawing-room.

Here they found only Edward and Henry, who appeared at their entrance to be in close conference, on some very interesting subject: for, though it was broken off at the approach of the females, they each continued thoughtful and abstracted, during the whole evening.

This kind of conduct in Edward, who was frequently pensive and reserved, would scarcely have been noticed—but in Henry, it was altogether so new and so uncommon, that it excited the utmost surprise in both his female companions.

At supper, when they were joined by Sir William, the unusual silence, and reserved manner of Henry, attracted even

his attention, and he enquired — if he was indisposed ?

“ No ; ” — replied he — “ why, should “ you think so ? ” — and immediately started another topic of discourse.

Edward, unable to conceal his chagrin, or the melancholy which so evidently oppressed him, arose suddenly, as soon as supper was over, and hastily bidding them good-night, retired to his own apartment. Emily, who had watched him attentively the whole evening, soon followed his example, and, with Olivia, almost immediately quitted the supper-room ; and after a few moments chat at the bedroom door of the latter, concerning the events of the evening, they separated — and each retired to their respective chambers.

When Emily laid her head upon her pillow, she found it impossible to rest. The occurrences of the evening passed in review before her, and sleep was effec-

tually banished. Each circumstance rose to her mind in regular succession; but the more she reflected on the subject, the more she was bewildered, and she knew not what to think.

That Miss Maitland should have been indisposed, she would have considered as nothing extraordinary, the heat of the Theatre might have overcome her, or her illness might have proceeded from fifty other causes; but, that the young men should have been so unusually affected, particularly Henry, who seldom exhibited any strong appearances of susceptibility, was something so strange, and out of the common way, that she was certain it must have proceeded from some cause, with which she was totally unacquainted.

That their emotion originated from some circumstance connected with the persons in the next box, she thought, could scarcely admit of a doubt; — for Miss Maitland, she recollected, had been indisposed from the time they had entered it; and, that Henry had, also changed

colour, and professed his eagerness to be gone, the very instant his eyes had glanced that way.—Edward, too, it was very evident, had quitted the box from a similar motive; and the expression on his countenance as he departed, was deeply impressed upon her mind—it was replete with sadness and emotion, which appeared to arise from anguish of the heart—and his conduct during the subsequent part of the evening, fully justified this opinion.

She now wished that she had taken more notice of the persons of those, who sat in the next box; as she might then, perhaps, have recognised some of them, and, by that means, have obtained some clue, by which to unravel the mystery; but her attention had been so wholly engaged by the indisposition of Miss Maitland, that she had no time or leisure, to think or to bestow upon any one else.

Olivia, however, had noticed them particularly, and observed the counte-

nance of each, and had told her, that she was positive, she had never seen either of them before; but, that one of the ladies she was certain knew Emily, for that she constantly kept her eyes fixed upon her; and that the gentleman, who so hastily left the box, when the lady had beckoned him to look at her, was, she was quite certain, the very same person who had put them all into such alarm, when they had mistaken him for Henry, at the door of the anti-room.

That these persons, whoever they were, were known to the whole family of the Maitlands, was very evident; but who they could be, that she had never heard of them before, or why their appearance had caused so much emotion in every individual of it, she could in no way make out; and the more she attempted to account for what appeared to her so strange and incomprehensible, the more she was bewildered, and lost in conjecture.

She was, therefore, still compelled to remain in doubt and uncertainty; at one

time fancying that, perhaps, it might be something relating to herself, and the next moment hastily rejecting such an idea as altogether improbable, not to say impossible.—Yet the assertion of Lady Overdo's woman, that she was the child of Miss Maitland, would rush across her thoughts, and, for a moment, she admitted the idea, that, perhaps, in some way or other, these people were connected with her; that the circumstance she had hitherto treated with the greatest contempt was true; and that she was, indeed, the child of Miss Maitland.

Yet the whole tenor of Miss Maitland's conduct was so perfectly irreproachable, so entirely and uniformly guided, according to the strictest principles of piety, integrity, and virtue, that she could not believe it possible, that, even in early life, she could ever have deviated from that line of conduct, which, ever since Emily had had the happiness of knowing her, she had constantly and in-

variably pursued :—and she rejected such an idea as hastily as she had formed it, from the perfect conviction, that if any dependance could be placed upon the honor, truth, and integrity of any human being, Miss Maitland was the person, on whom such dependance might be placed.

She was still, therefore, as far off as ever, from developing the mysterious circumstances of the evening, nor did she suppose that her curiosity in this respect would ever be gratified, for the secret, whatever it was, seemed to be buried deep in the bosoms of the family, and to occasion too much pain to every individual of it, for them ever to suffer it to be revealed. Besides, she considered, had this not been the case, so long as she had been a member of the family, it was very unlikely, but that she should have heard something dropt upon the subject before now—it was evidently a very painful one, be it what it would—for Miss

Maitland had said in the coach, she recollected, that it would be better not to *distress* her brother, by mentioning the particulars.

It was, however, to no purpose to bewilder herself any further—she could gain no clue to the mystery, though she could not shake the subject from her mind, but laid ruminating upon it for some hours unable to sleep, till at last, “Kind Nature’s sweet restorer” gently visited her eyelids, and she obtained the blessing, she had for sometime vainly courted.

CHAP. V.

Can there be such, and have they peace of mind?
 Have they in all the series of their changing,
 One happy hour?

Rowe.

THE next morning, Miss Maitland still continuing much indisposed, from the effects of a violent head-ache, which had succeeded to her faintness and agitation of the preceding evening, she remained in her own apartment, and did not propose coming down stairs for the whole day.

When Emily went to enquire after her, and to offer her services in any way they might prove acceptable, Miss Mait-

land said—“that, though she was obliged
“to her for her kindness and attention,
“yet nothing would be so agreeable to
“her that day, as to be left quite alone.”

“The head-ache will not bear a com-
“panion,” added she, “not even my
“quiet, compassionate Emily, and you
“cannot, therefore, please me better, my
“dear girl, than by ordering the carriage,
“and going with Olivia this morning
“to pay a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Wat-
“kins. His ailments are of a different
“nature to mine—his, require company
“and attention, to enable him to support
“them with patience:—mine, on the
“contrary, will only yield to solitude
“and a dark room.—You have no other
“engagement, I suppose, my dear?”—
added she, seeing that Emily rather hesi-
tated.

“O, no;”—replied Emily—“but only
“I don’t like to go out, and leave you
“at home so ill.”

“Never mind me, my dear;”—re-

sumed Miss Maitland,—“ you would not
“ be with me, you know, if you was to
“ stay at home. Mine, though severe,
“ for the time it lasts, is only, I trust, a
“ day’s illness; and to-morrow I dare
“ say I shall be quite well.”

“ I hope you may !” — cried Emily—
“ but, I cannot bear the thoughts of
“ going out :—it seems so unkind to leave
“ you.”

“ You will oblige me, my dear, by
“ going ;”—resumed Miss Maitland, se-
riously.—“ When we are in pain our-
“ selves, it makes us more thoughtful
“ for others, who are in a similar pre-
“ dicament ;—therefore, you will oblige
“ me by going to sit an hour or two with
“ Mr. Watkins, and taking Olivia with
“ you.”

Emily, to whom the wish of Miss Maitland was as a law, immediately acquiesced :—and, bidding her farewell, went to seek Olivia, to acquaint her with this desire of their best friend.—

Olivia made not the least objection; and, having first stept up to Miss Maitland's chamber, to take leave of her, accompanied Emily to the house of her uncle—whom they found alone;—Mrs. Watkins being gone into the city to make some purchases.

He was highly pleased at this visit; and said — “ they would be such nice
“ company for him, during his mother's
“ absence. For I don't know how it is,”
continued he, “ but I never much relish
“ the thoughts of being alone. Solitude
“ hath charms, they say; but I never
“ could find them out; at least, I am
“ sure, it has none for me; unless melan-
“ choly is one—for it never fails, I know,
“ to make me low-spirited.”

“ I am glad we happened to come
“ then this morning, Sir,”—said Emily—
“ though I was very loth to go out, and
“ leave poor Miss Maitland.”

“ Aye”—cried he—“ I was just going
“ to ask, why she did not come with

“ you ?—Is not she well then ? — or, why
“ was you sorry to leave her ? ”

“ She is very unwell, Sir ; ” — replied
Emily—“ she is suffering under a most
“ inveterate head-ache, which necessarily
“ confines her for the day to her own
“ room.”

“ Poor thing ! ” — said he, compassion-
ately — “ that’s bad enough, in all con-
“ science — only, one thing there is to
“ be said for it, it is a mere temporary
“ inconvenience, here to-day and gone
“ to-morrow — not like the gout, that ties
“ you fast in your arm-chair, and keeps
“ you there for your whole life.”

“ To be sure it is not so bad as that ; ”
—cried Olivia, — “ that must be terrible !
“ —dreadful ! — never to be able to stir
“ out ! — What I should do in such a case,
“ I don’t know ! ”

“ Patience—patience ” — cried Mr. Wat-
kins, speaking from his own practical ex-
perience, — “ patience, Olivia, would be
“ your best, and indeed only remedy. —

“ But, is Miss Maitland subject to these attacks ? ”

“ Sometimes ; ” — answered Olivia, —
“ but not very frequently, unless she
“ fatigues herself too much, or has any
“ thing particular to vex her — and that
“ is the reason of her being so ill to-day.
She then proceeded to give her uncle an account of their visit to the Theatre the preceding evening, and of its consequences to Miss Maitland, with the whole particulars of the conduct of each of the party, and of her fainting, at last, quite away.

He appeared to listen attentively to every circumstance as she minutely related them, and when she had finished speaking, asked her, in a tone of much interest—“ whether she knew who the
“ people were in the next box ? ”

“ No ; — that I do not ; ” — answered Olivia—“ that is what I wish to know.
“ And yet, on their first entrance, the
“ box-keeper pronounced the name of

“ Lady somebody loud enough, I am
“ sure !—but, I declare now, I have quite
“ forgotten what it was. Do you re-
“ member, Emily ?”

“ Let me recollect,”—said Emily, con-
sidering — “ for I heard the name called
“ out as well as you.—Was it not Mor-
“ timer, do you think ?”

“ That it was !”—cried Olivia.—Yes,
“ that was the very name !—To think I
“ should be such a simpleton as to forget
“ it :—I recollect it now very well.—
“ Lady Mortimer’s places—yes, yes, that
“ was the very name, sure enough !”

“ Lady Mortimer !—was it ?”—ex-
claimed Mr. Watkins—“ that Hussey !—
“ then Miss Maitland’s illness at the
“ playhouse is easily accounted for. It
“ is a shame, that a creature like her,
“ should be suffered to go about, marr-
“ ing the happiness of people !—I only
“ wish I was King !—I would soon order
“ matters differently :—I would confine
“ all such Hussies to bread and water.”

“ Why, what did she do, uncle, that
“ you are so violent against her ? ” — asked
Olivia.

“ Do ! — a worthless woman ! ” — ex-
claimed he, — then with much surprise on
his countenance, added — “ What ! — did
“ you never hear that story ? ”

“ No ; — never ; ” — replied Olivia. “ I
“ do not even know to what story you
“ allude.”

“ Don’t you ? ” — cried he, — “ that’s
“ very strange, too, so long as you have
“ lived in Sir William’s family — why,
“ then, I’ll tell it you.”

“ O ! — do, uncle ; ” — cried Olivia, ea-
gerly — “ for I should like to hear it very
“ much ! ”

Emily was equally anxious upon the
subject, though she forbore to say so.

“ Well then, you must know,” re-
sumed Mr. Watkins, “ that somewhere
“ about the time as our Mary married
“ my Lord Vaversly, which every body
“ reckoned such a great match for her —

“ though, for my own part, I never
“ thought so much of it, considering
“ how it turned out, and what a domi-
“ neering consequential chap he was :—
“ taking her over to foreign parts, away
“ from her relations, as if they were not
“ worthy to wipe his shoes :— and, as
“ proud as Lucifer ! holding his head so
“ high. And all for what ? — Why, be-
“ cause he could count up a long list of
“ Ancestors :—and, what was he the bet-
“ ter for that ?—A parcel of nonsense !—
“ they ought to have taught him better
“ than to value himself upon any such
“ adventitious occasion. — Did you ever
“ hear,” added he, “ how once he want-
“ ed to make me a captain ?”

“ O, yes ;”—replied Olivia—“ I have
“ heard that story, often ; so uncle, you
“ can go on, if you please.”

“ Well, well, then I shan’t tell it you
“ over again ;”—resumed he, “ but it
“ was a good joke for all that. Much
“ I’m fit for a captain, if he could but

“ see me now. Instead of marching
“ about from pillar to post, it is as much
“ as I can do, with my crutches, to get
“ from one room to another, and more
“ than I can, sometimes.”

“ But, as I was saying,” continued he,
“ if he had not carried her into foreign
“ parts, she might, perhaps, have been
“ alive and merry now ; so, I don’t see
“ as she got much by matching so high.
“ She had better by half have had a
“ husband in her own station of life, who
“ would not have been ashamed of her
“ relations.—Poor Mary !—it was the
“ death of her, at last, that’s for certain !”
Then after a pause of a few moments, he
said—“ but that’s neither here nor there ;
“ besides I was going to tell you about
“ Miss Maitland.”

“ Not Miss Maitland, uncle,”—interrupted Olivia, somewhat impatient at this digression ;—“ It was about Lady
“ Mortimer you was going to tell us.”

“ Aye, aye,”—said he—“ but all in

“ good time;—you must not be impatient; I have not come to her yet;—
“ you must let me go through my story in a regular way.—So, as I was saying, much about the time as my Lord Vaversly took a fancy to your mother, Sir William Maitland—(but, he was not Sir William then, only plain Mr. because his father was alive)—took it into his head to marry. The person he selected for his wife, was one of your beauties, who think all the world made for them, and that they came into it for no other purpose, than to dress, and be admired. However, with me, ‘handsome is, that handsome does.’—
“ For my part, I don’t like such folks; nine times out of ten they are good for nothing. However, Sir William was over head and ears in love:—not but what she came of a very good family, quite upon an equality with his own, and had, besides, a swinging fortune!
“ —She was only daughter to the de-

“ ceased Earl of Norton, who gained so
“ many victories, and died, at last, in the
“ service of his country.”

“ When they were first married, he
“ brought her down to Melbury Park,
“ indeed they came there to pass the
“ honey-moon; and, as I have heard
“ your grandmother say, who, you will
“ recollect, was governess at that time,
“ or I might more properly say compa-
“ nion to Miss Maitland,—(it was just
“ before Lord Vaversly paid his court to
“ our Mary) — that she was one of the
“ most fascinating, beautiful women, that
“ ever the sun shone on.—Fascinating!—
“ with a witness!—a hussey!—However,
“ that has nothing to do with my story
“ at present.”

“ But you have not told us about
“ Lady Mortimer yet, uncle?” — cried
Olivia.—“ What has this lady to do with
“ her?”

“ Don’t be in a hurry, my dear;—you
“ shall hear all in good time:—but, it is

“rude to interrupt any one; though I
“dare say, you did not mean it to
“be so.”

“O, no;”—answered Olivia, with
much good-humour, “that I did not;
“—but I will not interrupt you for the
“future, so pray, uncle, proceed.”

“Where was I?——O! I recollect—
“Sir William, I believe, did not much
“admire his son’s choice; for she was
“even then, so finical and fantastical!—
“but he always behaved very kind to
“them, for, indeed, it was not in his na-
“ture to behave otherwise to any human
“being, much more to his own son.
“Love they say is blind;—and so young
“Maitland did not perceive that his
“wife had any faults, but thought her
“the most amiable woman that ever
“breathed. Alas! how a man may be
“deceived!”

“In a very short time, however, my
“lady began to tire of the sameness of
“Melbury Park, and of seeing nobody

“ but her husband, and his family, and
“ visiting, as was their constant custom,
“ only the poor cottagers—except, now
“ and then, when some of the neighbour-
“ ing families called to pay them a friend-
“ ly visit:—and so she persuaded her
“ husband to go to town, though much
“ against his inclination, for he was ever
“ fond of a country life: and had fondly
“ hoped, from the sentiments she had
“ expressed before marriage, that his lady
“ would have been so too.”

“ However, he was disappointed; for
“ immediately upon their arrival in Lon-
“ don, she commenced a series of gaiety
“ and dissipation, which ill accorded
“ with the views and domestic habits of
“ her husband, but which threatened a
“ complete overthrow of all his schemes
“ and plans of happiness. She was never
“ pleased, or good-humoured, but when
“ in a crowd:—He, on the contrary,
“ loved to stay at home, and enjoy a
“ quiet, rational hour in his own house.

“ To oblige her, however, he consented
“ to give up his own happiness, and ac-
“ cede to her wish of living expensively,
“ and giving grand entertainments ; of
“ spending his nights in a promiscuous
“ crowd, where he could scarcely recog-
“ nize the countenance of a single friend ;
“ and his days in the languor naturally
“ attendant on a life, of what is falsely
“ termed, pleasure.

“ At length, however, there was a
“ prospect of her Ladyship becoming a
“ mother : an event, which rejoiced her
“ husband exceedingly, from the hope of
“ its being the means of weaning her
“ from those silly pleasures, to which al-
“ most every moment of her time was
“ now devoted.

“ About this period, the father of the
“ present Sir William paid the debt of
“ nature ; deeply regretted by his chil-
“ dren, and, indeed, by all who knew
“ him ; for a better heart, or a worthier
“ man, I don't believe ever existed. His

“ son, of course, inherited his father’s
“ title and estates ; but, besides these, he
“ had been possessed of a large personal
“ property, the bulk of which he be-
“ queathed to his daughter—which gave
“ her a very noble independency:—not
“ more than she deserved, however,
“ for she was a true child of her fa-
“ ther.

“ As the death of Sir William effectually put a stop to all visiting and being visited for a time, Lady Maitland agreed to accompany her husband to Melbury, which, by the death of his father, was now become his ; and where it would have been his wish constantly to reside:—though, as I’ve heard my mother say, she did it with a very ill grace, grumbling at every circumstance that did not exactly please her, and from morning to night running down the country, as only fit for savages to live in.

“ Though Sir William was much hurt

‘at this conduct of his wife, he forbore
‘to notice it:—though, I wonder how
‘he could!—She deserved a good trim-
‘ming; and would have had it from
‘me, I am sure, had I been her hus-
‘band. But, as he was then in daily
‘expectation of a son and heir, perhaps
‘he did not like to thwart her, or vex
‘her in any way, that might put her in a
‘passion.

“So matters went on in this way-like,
‘till Edward, he is the eldest, I believe,
‘was born. Then, there were, as you
‘may suppose, great rejoicings; but,
‘however, there was a sort of a squabble
‘among ’em too;—and, what do you
‘think it was about?”

“I am sure I can’t guess.”——said
Olivia.

“Why, neither more nor less than
‘this.—Sir William wished her to suckle
‘her own child—a very hard case to be
‘sure!—but, no;—my lady did not
‘choose to do it; so she told him point

“ blank she wouldn’t. Well; instead of
“ insisting upon it that she should, he,
“ like an easy, good-natured man as he
“ always was, suffered her to have her
“ own way, and so the poor baby was
“ turned over to a stranger. Shame on
“ her!—say I—and all such mothers as
“ her!—but they get no good by their
“ unnatural conduct, for the children
“ never love ’em, that you may depend
“ upon.”

“ Do you think that makes any differ-
“ ence, Sir?”—asked Emily.

“ I am sure it does, my dear;—Don’t
“ the children always love best the wo-
“ man who suckles them?—Yes, yes,
“ I am sure of it: nor the mother don’t
“ love them half so well, neither; and so
“ you’ll find when you come to hear the
“ end of my story.”

Olivia, who was weary of her uncle’s minuteness, began to fear, that there never would be an end.

“ It is, certainly, the duty of every wo-

“man” observed Emily, “to fulfil towards her infant, the office which Nature evidently intended her to perform. And, unless ill-health or debility of constitution, on the part of the parent, incapacitates her from performing this allotted duty, I think she is excusable for neglecting it, and for assigning her infant over to a stranger, for that, which she alone, ought to bestow upon her own child.”

“You talk like a sensible girl;”—said Mr. Watkins—“but you have been brought up in a good school, my dear;—Miss Maitland is just the woman to teach a young girl what she ought to be; and to set her a good example into the bargain.”

“Well, uncle,”—cried Olivia,—“but how did Lady Maitland conduct herself after Edward was born?—Was she any steadier than she had been before?”

“Not a jot;”—answered he.—“There

“ was not a pin to choose :—for, directly
“ she got up again, she was for galloping
“ back to London. He entreated her to
“ remain at Melbury a little longer; but,
“ as she never consulted his happiness,
“ she refused, saying—that to live such
“ a moping life, as they had done of late,
“ for another fortnight, would be the
“ death of her, and she could not think
“ how he could have the cruelty to de-
“ sire it.

“ So, to London they came;—and,
“ after a short time, she threw off her
“ mourning, and was as gay and as dissi-
“ pated as ever. — Finding that all he
“ could say against this life of levity and
“ pleasure, was of no avail; that she
“ seemed determined to pursue one re-
“ gular system of fashionable dissipation,
“ to the entire neglect of her conjugal
“ and maternal duties; he resolved no
“ longer to oppose, what it was not in
“ his power to prevent, and, therefore,
“ suffered her to take her own course, and

“do exactly as she liked. He was too
“easy by half!”—exclaimed he—“but
“you shall hear.

“Sometimes, to oblige her, for he
“still loved her a vast deal better than
“she merited, he would accompany her
“to the parties she frequented; but his
“constitution, which was never one of
“your over strong ones, would not let
“him do this often.—How *she* bore it so
“long, is very astonishing!—for she was
“at one place or another almost every
“night. — But these ladies of quality
“must be as strong as horses, or they
“could never do as they do;—for I know
“she never hardly came home before
“two or three, and sometimes a great
“deal later. So, as she would go, you
“know, why she was obliged very fre-
“quently to go by herself, and leave her
“husband to pass the evening alone, or
“with his sister, who had resided with
“him, ever since the decease of his
“father.

“ Miss Maitland was then a young
“ woman, and, like all others of her age,
“ and time of life, loved pleasure; but
“ then it was in moderation. She did
“ not devote her whole time to it, to the
“ utter exclusion of every duty, or suffer
“ it to obliterate every kind emotion of
“ the heart. She enjoyed going into
“ company, now and then, but never
“ made a business of what was only in-
“ tended as a relaxation; and, like her
“ brother, was fondly attached to those
“ quiet employments and amusements,
“ which are to be found at home.

“ In the absence of my Lady, there-
“ fore, did these worthy people sit many
“ an evening, planning schemes of mercy
“ and benevolence; for they were charit-
“ able, as I have heard my mother say,
“ almost to excess—whilst she was flirt-
“ ing about from place to place, and
“ spending as much, in the article of
“ dress alone, as would have sufficed to
“ keep a poor family for a month from

“starving. But these were matters she
“never troubled herself about; for,
“though she was lavish, she was by no
“means liberal;—what she squandered
“away was upon herself, and for her
“own gratification—she cared little about
“that of other’s.

“Sir William and his sister caused
“many a one to sing for joy, and glad-
“dened many an honest heart—though it
“was always done in secret; for I should
“never have heard any thing about it,
“if it had not been for my mother.—
“They never blazoned forth their good
“deeds. And, though I am told they now
“subscribe to most of the public chari-
“ties, yet you never see their names in
“the list, in the front of a newspaper.
“No—they content themselves with the
“secret consciousness of having per-
“formed a good action, and of obtain-
“ing the sure and certain approbation of
“their God.”

“Ah! that is so like them!”—ex-

claimed Emily.—“ But I beg your pardon, Sir, for the interruption—which, I assure you, was involuntary.”

“ Make no apology, my dear ;— it needs none. I love to see young people sensible of the merits of their friends, especially when they are kind to them ;—and they have been so to you, I am sure ; particularly Miss Maitland—therefore, you have every reason to speak well of them, and it would be very unnatural if you did not.”

“ I have indeed, Sir !”—cried Emily, with emotion.—“ I do not know what would have become of me, had it not been for her !—Yes ;—Miss Maitland is indeed entitled to my eternal gratitude ! and I never shall be able to repay her, for half the kindness she has shewn me.”

“ And yet, even this woman, whose conduct is so truly praise-worthy, could not escape the fangs of defamation. For, no sooner had she taken you under her protection, than it was maliciously

“ whispered about, nay, many did not
“ scruple to assert that they knew it to
“ be a fact, that the child she had so
“ humanely and so generously adopted,
“ was her own, by the man, to whom she
“ was once on the point of marriage.
“ Her meeting with you abroad, seemed
“ rather to give it a colour, especially to
“ those malevolent beings who wished to
“ find it true.

“ This scandalous report, you may be
“ sure, did not fail to reach me;—but,
“ wherever I heard it mentioned, I took
“ especial care to contradict it; for I
“ knew her too well, and my mother had
“ been witness to her amiable disposition,
“ and invariable integrity of conduct,
“ for such a long series of years, that,”
added he, warmly—“ I would have stak-
“ ed my life upon her honour !”

Emily almost started at this seeming corroboration of the assertion of Lady Overdo's woman,—as related to her by Madeline ; but, as she felt it impossible

to speak upon a subject of so much interest to Mr. Watkins, she suffered his speech to pass without comment; and he, therefore, continued the narrative—from which, to the great vexation of Olivia, he made such long and frequent digressions.

“So, my Lady,” resumed he, “went
“on, pursuing the same high career, till
“there was a stop put to it for awhile,
“by the birth of another child—Henry,
“your sweetheart, that is now”—nodding to Olivia. “After that, in due course
“of time, there came a third; but that
“poor thing died in its infancy.—Ah
“well!—it was a happy thing it did!—
“for, by that means it was spared the
“misery of living to witness the shame
“of its mother, and having its feelings
“constantly wounded by the remem-
“brance of her disgraceful conduct.

“She took it in her head, for she was
“full of whims, to suckle this last child
“herself; and either was, or pretended

“ to be, vastly fond of it—but, I believe,
“ it was all a sham, else she would never
“ have done, as she did afterwards, at the
“ time of its death—a good-for-nothing
“ hussey !

“ When this last young one was about
“ eighteen months old, I believe, or
“ somewhere thereabout, for I am not
“ certain, only it could walk alone, I
“ remember ; I happened to go down in-
“ to the neighbourhood of Melbury, to
“ pay my mother a visit, who, you may
“ recollect, at that time, lived in a vil-
“ lage hard-by. I had not been there
“ long, before she whispered me, that
“ there had been a suitor for sometime
“ past, paying his addresses to Miss
“ Maitland, and that he happened to be
“ down at Melbury Park, at that very
“ time. So, you may be sure, I was anx-
“ ious to see him ; which I had very
“ soon an opportunity of doing, for Sir
“ William would take no denial, but that

“ mother and I should come and dine
“ with him.

“ Accordingly we went. And a hand-
“ somer, better-looking, gentlemanly
“ man, I don’t remember I ever saw.
“ No pride nor haughtiness—he treated
“ my mother and me, with the same po-
“ liteness and affability as if we had been
“ his equals. None of my Lord Vavers-
“ ly’s stiffness and nonsense!—and yet
“ he was much higher in life than your
“ father—but *his* pride was insufferable!
“ —it was engrafted in his very nature—
“ and he would have been just the same,
“ I dare say, if he had been only a cob-
“ ler.

“ Sir William highly approved of this
“ match for his sister, which nobody
“ could wonder at, for, to say the truth,
“ Miss Maitland and he seemed born for
“ each other. Both handsome, and in
“ the prime of life; each, in the posses-
“ sion of a noble fortune, and a natural

“ disposition to do good with it; they
“ might have done a world of charity—
“ and, at the same time, have had enough
“ remaining to support an establishment
“ truly princely.

“ My mother likewise assured me, for
“ she was a better judge of such matters
“ than me, that he was, also, very sensible, and well-informed; a great speaker in the Parliament House, where he
“ would sometimes talk for hours; and
“ at that time, he was reckoned an ornament to the country.

“ Added to the title and estates of his
“ father, (being an only child) he had
“ inherited a noble fortune; and they
“ only waited, till the lawyers had completed the settlements, to become man
“ and wife.”

“ They might wait long enough for
“ them,”—interrupted Olivia—“ for lawyers are terribly dilatory in their proceedings. There is no end of waiting
“ for them.”

“ You have found it so, I suppose ? ”—enquired he, smiling, and looking archly at her—“ Hey, Olivia !—Am I not right “ in my conjecture ? ”

“ Perhaps you may ; ”—replied she, whilst a blush passed over her countenance—“ but, come, don’t let us talk “ about that, for I long to hear the con- “ clusion of your story.”

He laughed, and nodding significantly, thus continued :—“ The house was new “ furnished ; the wedding clothes were “ even prepared—it had gone as far as “ this—when all this fair prospect was “ overthrown, and effectually annihilated, by that devil of a woman, God “ forgive me !—that good-for-nothing “ Hussey !—that Lady Maitland !

“ From the very first of his paying “ court to her sister-in-law, my Lady had “ staid at home more than usual ; and “ even was willing to make one in all “ their domestic parties ; taking more “ notice of her children, and appearing

“ more attached to them, than ever she
“ had done before.

“ Sir William, perfectly unsuspecting
“ of the real motive, by which her con-
“ duct was guided, congratulated himself
“ upon this happy change ; and flattered
“ himself, that she had, at last, become
“ sensible of her error, and that he should
“ now shortly see her, the fond, domestic
“ companion, he had so long vainly wish-
“ ed her to be. He now loved her as
“ fondly, and treated her, even if possi-
“ ble, more kindly, than ever. Which
“ she repaid with the blackest ingrati-
“ tude : — for very different were her
“ motives for this change of conduct, to
“ those, which the fond partiality of her
“ husband, had induced her to believe.

“ The fact was, — that the handsome
“ person of this suitor of Miss Maitland’s
“ had caught her eye ; and she commen-
“ ced, I have no doubt, a regular plan of
“ attack — which, unhappily, was, in the
“ end, successful. Throwing out her

“lures to engage his attention, and employing every art and fascination, which, as she was a deep one, she knew well how to practice; and which, as it proved, he had not either sufficient resolution, or strength of mind to resist. To be sure she was then, and is still, they say, by those who have seen her lately, a very beautiful woman:—and, sometimes, even the wisest of us, are overpowered by these she-devils in the shape of women.—Yet there was no excuse for him, neither—let her be ever so wickedly inclined!—for, was she not the wife of his friend—even had Miss Maitland been out of the question.”

“Well, but, uncle,”—asked Olivia—
“I do not understand it. You say this Lady Maitland prevented the marriage—and how could that be?—She could not have him herself, you know, for she was a married woman.”

“Yes,”—returned he, seriously—“any

“ body would naturally imagine *that* to
“ have been a sufficient bar—but, in this
“ case, it did not prove so—for the mar-
“ riage was, by means of this worthless
“ woman, effectually, and for ever set
“ aside.

“ The time was, however, drawing
“ near, when Miss Maitland was to be
“ united to Lord Mortimer, and——.”

“ Mortimer!”—interrupted Olivia—
“ was it Lord Mortimer then, to whom
“ Miss Maitland was once, so nearly, on
“ the point of marriage?—O! then that
“ was him, I dare say, who appeared at
“ the door of the anti-room last night,
“ when we were waiting for Henry, and
“ caused us all so much alarm:—and
“ that accounts for her falling down upon
“ the sofa so immediately in a fainting
“ fit.”

“ I had no doubt,” returned Mr. Wat-
kins, “ of its being him, the very mo-
“ ment you mentioned the circumstance,
“ only I did not know that the gentle-

“man had returned to England; he
“has lived abroad for a great many
“years past; but directly you mention-
“ed the name of Mortimer, it was all
“as plain as noon-day. So she was
“with him, was she?—Ah! I don’t won-
“der at Miss Maitland being affected!—
“She has not seen him before, I dare
“say, since the affair took place:—her
“emotion is easily accounted for—for he
“behaved like a rascal to her!”

“There were several ladies in the
“box,” rejoined Olivia, “and, I know,
“they called out *Lady* Mortimer’s places
“—but, somehow, I don’t rightly
“understand the mystery now; and I
“long, therefore, to know how it was
“brought about. So, do go on, uncle,
“will you?”

“Well, they were soon going to be
“married, as I said before, when it so
“happened that——.”

Here a rap at the door, interrupted
Mr. Watkins, and announced a visitor.

“ How provoking ! ” — exclaimed Olivia,
“ — now we shall be obliged to leave off,
“ in the most interesting part of the
“ story, and not be able to hear the con-
“ clusion of it, till another time. Who-
“ ever they are, I know, I wish they had
“ been further ! — I wonder who it can
“ be ! ”

“ Perhaps it’s my mother ; ” — observed
Mr. Watkins, in the attitude of listen-
ing.

“ I wish it may ! — for then you can
“ finish the story, uncle : ” — cried Olivia.

“ But Mrs. Watkins could not return
“ without a carriage,” — observed Emily —
“ and I did not hear the sound of wheels : ”
— then turning to Olivia, added — “ do
“ you know, the knock sounded to me
“ like Edward’s : — did you take any no-
“ tice of it ? ”

“ Why, no ; ” — replied Olivia, archly —
“ but I am not in the habit of remark-
“ ing the peculiarities of Mr. Edward, so
“ much as you are — and it sounded ra-

“ther a meanish kind of knock, I think,
“now you mention it,” continued she,
in a tone of playful raillery.

Emily was somewhat disconcerted at this badinage on the subject of Edward, before Mr. Watkins, but said—
“that if it was him, she had no doubt
“but that he had knocked softly on purpose, knowing that there was an inva-
“lid in the house.”

“Ah! well, I acknowledge that is
“a trait characteristic of Edward;”—re-
sumed Olivia—“for he is always thought-
“ful and attentive to the feelings of
“others. But why do I tell you of his
“good qualities!—You can discover
“them fast enough without my assis-
“tance. But, hush!—here they come!
“whoever they are.”

Emily was right in her conjecture; for the servant threw open the door of the apartment, and announced Mr.—Edward Maitland.

He appeared astonished, on his en-

trance, to find there his young companions ; as, having quitted Park Lane early, he had not been apprized of their visit to Clapham ; and, giving them a friendly nod as he passed them, stepped up to Mr Watkins, who was always stationed in his easy chair, on one particular spot, and said—"That having that morning a little business to transact in that neighbourhood, he had done himself the pleasure of calling to enquire after his health."

"Thank you ; thank you very kindly, Mr. Edward"—replied Mr. Watkins—"I promise you I'm much beholden to you for paying me this visit. And these little girls here, I take it very kind of them, to come and see a poor lame man. But what business, pray Mr. Edward, if I may be so bold, led you into my neighbourhood this morning?"

At this question Edward appeared disconcerted, a slight suffusion overspread

his countenance, and he hesitated.—“A
“ little private business, Sir,” replied he,
“ which——perhaps——”

“ You had rather not speak of;”—
said Mr. Watkins, “ and I don’t require
“ it. I had no right to ask where you
“ had been; it was no business of mine;
“ and I honour your sincerity by speaking
“ downright, and to the point, without
“ any prevarication; and have to beg
“ your pardon for being so inquisi-
“ tive.”

Edward said—“ He wished not to have
“ any secrets, but as the business he had
“ been upon, concerned another person,
“ he did not consider himself at liberty
“ to speak of it.” But, though this as-
sertion was strictly matter of fact, yet it
was his own modesty, that prevented him
from relating the circumstances of his
morning’s employment;—which, had
they been known, would have reflected
on him the highest honour:—for he had

been occupied in rescuing from the horrors of a prison, a poor, but deserving character, by paying a sum of money for his liberation, and seeing him once more restored to his sorrowing wife, and infant family.

This poor man, who was a Shoemaker by trade, had, inadvertantly, become bound for a neighbour of his, who had, hitherto, been reckoned an honest man; but, unfortunately for the poor Shoemaker, he, at length, proved a rogue, ran away in the night, and left this poor fellow responsible for the payment of the money.

This affair proved his entire ruin. For the loss of all his savings so preyed upon his mind, that it threw him into a fever; and being unable to work, and with a family to support, he contracted several debts, for which he was, at length, confined; and was, almost, with his family, in a state of starvation, when he was,

fortunately, found out by the worthy Edward Maitland—who lost no time in rescuing him from a fate so wretched, and so unmerited.

He had this morning re-instated him in his shop, and promised to look in upon him now and then, to see how he was going on; and as the man lived in the vicinity of Clapham, he thought he might as well call, and ask Mr. Watkins how he did.

When he found that Emily and Olivia had the carriage in waiting, and were going home immediately, he proposed to send back his own horse by the servant, and take a ride with them. “O! we can have no objection, Sir,”—cried Olivia:—“you have not, I suppose, Emily?” added she, playfully, and with much archness in her look and manner.

“Nonsense!”—cried Mr. Watkins—“what objection can she have?—But, what then, are you all going?—Bless

“ me ! I did not think it was so late ” —
looking at the clock. — “ But, suppose,”
added he, “ as the distance to you boys
“ and girls is nothing, especially as you
“ have a carriage to carry you backwards
“ and forwards, that you all come here
“ again in the afternoon, and drink tea
“ with me ? — I can’t ask you to stay to
“ dinner very well, because my mother
“ is not at home, and she is, as I may
“ say, my right-hand : — but she’ll be
“ back to tea ; so now do all of you
“ come, will you ? ”

The females said, “ they had no
“ objection ; ” but Edward said — “ he
“ was sorry it happened so, but, that
“ he had made an engagement with Lord
“ Vaversly, to go, that afternoon, to
“ Richmond, and, therefore, should not
“ be able to escort the ladies. ”

“ Well, then, if that is the case, ” —
cried Mr. Watkins, “ they must come
“ without you : ” — at the same time giv-

ing Olivia a significant nod, as much as to say—we can then finish the story.

They now arose for the purpose of taking leave, promising, without fail, to be with him in the afternoon; and then, accompanied by Edward, quitted the house, and entered the carriage, on their return to Park Lane.

During their ride from Clapham to town, Edward appeared particularly animated, and in unusual spirits. The sweet reflection of having been the means of rescuing a fellow-creature from distress and ruin, and of having replaced him in a situation, which had not been forfeited by any guilt or misconduct of his own, irradiated his countenance, and diffused over his mind that delightful consciousness, that sweet serenity, which the performance of a good action never fails to introduce.

“ The pleasure that from virtuous action flows,

— “ The man of virtue only feels and knows.”

Emily was rejoiced to see him in such good spirits, particularly after the event of the preceding evening, which had appeared, at the time, to have affected him so deeply. She was now no longer at a loss to account for his conduct. Mr. Watkins had sufficiently elucidated the apparent mystery. It was but natural that he should espouse the cause of his aunt, of whom, she knew, he entertained the highest opinion, and loved, with an affection similar to that he bore his father. It was very natural, therefore, that he should have been affected by her indisposition, and that his indignation should have been strongly excited by the appearance of the man, who, as Mr. Watkins had declared, had used her so ill.

She, however, sat almost in trembling expectation of Olivia's introducing the subject, which, she feared, would instantly check his vivacity by renewing

unpleasant ideas. But she need not have been alarmed; for Olivia, who imagined that this overflow of spirits on his part, proceeded solely from his joy at his meeting so unexpectedly with Emily—(for whom, she had long entertained an idea, that he bore an affection, which he concealed within the secret recesses of his own heart)—and being extremely good-natured, she did not wish to interrupt the pleasurable sensations, reflected upon his countenance, by introducing a subject, which, she was well assured, could not fail to renew others, not likely to add to his felicity, but rather to bring back his former melancholy and thoughtfulness.

Though the subject, therefore, was frequently on the very edge of her lips, she did not once suffer herself even to allude, either to what had past at the Theatre, the preceding evening, or this morning at her uncle's;

but she felt it to be a powerful act of self-denial, for she could think of nothing else, during their whole ride to town.

CHAP. VI.

Oh ! such a deed——
 That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
 Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
 From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
 And sets a blister there: makes marriage vows
 As false as dicer's oaths.

SHAKESPEARE.

ON their arrival in Park Lane, the females went immediately to the Dressing-room of Miss Maitland; whom, they found, just the same as they had left her—reclining upon the sofa, with the windows of the room darkened, that the light might not affect her head, which still ached violently. They informed her of their engagement for the afternoon; at which, she professed herself much pleased; and said—“they could not oblige her more, than by spending the time, she was under the necessity of with-

“ drawing from them, by going again to
“ visit the invalid.

“ And now my dear girls,” added she,
“ do not think me unkind, but I had rather
“ you would not come to my room again :
“ I prefer being alone. My head is so
“ painful, that it is irksome to me to talk.
“ Therefore, do not come here after din-
“ ner, for I shall try to forget myself
“ for an hour or two, by lying down
“ upon the bed, and I should wish not
“ to be disturbed. You can take the
“ carriage, you know, and go early ; Mr.
“ Watkins will like it the better :—and
“ now, my dear girls, added she, if you
“ will excuse me, I had rather be alone.”

In compliance with her wishes, there-
fore, they immediately left her, and went
to dress for dinner. Which affair was
scarcely accomplished, before the servant
announced it to be upon table.

When they entered the dining-parlour,
Olivia enquired of Henry,—what he
meant to do with himself that afternoon ?

—He informed her, that he was going with his brother and hers to Richmond.

“You are pretty gentlemen,” said she, sportively, “to go upon these parties by yourselves;—I think you might have had the manners, or the politeness, to ask Emily and me to go with you.”

“We are going to try some horses;”—returned Henry—“therefore, you know, Olivia, it would be impossible to have you with us.”

“Ah! that is as you say;”—retorted she.—“Pray, Mr. Edward, is this true? You did not say any thing about this horse story to us this morning.”

“It is true, nevertheless, Miss Vaversly”—replied Edward—“and is the only reason that we did not invite you and Miss Doraton to be of the party.”

“Well, if you say so,” said she, “I suppose it is so;—and, if that is the case, I assure you, I should not be very eager to go; for I have no ambition to see either of you break your necks.”

“God forbid!”—exclaimed Emily—

“How could you think of such a thing, “Olivia?” — shuddering, and turning pale at the idea.

“There is no danger of that, I hope,” said Lord Vaversly, who had dined with them, to be in readiness for their afternoon’s excursion, and who had noticed Emily’s change of countenance. “There “is no danger, I hope, to be apprehended, “Miss Doraton, for we are none of us “very dashing riders.”

“But strange horses are sometimes “dangerous; are they not?”—enquired she, with an appearance of much interest.

“O! you need not be so solicitous “about it;”—cried Henry, with a sneer, and a kind of half laugh—“we shall “come home safe, I doubt not!—we are “all very well able to take care of our- “selves.”

Emily’s paleness was now quickly succeeded by a blush, which arose from several causes; one of which, was, from the fear that she had inadvertantly be-

trayed the deep interest she took in whatever concerned Edward, and, that his brother had penetrated what she had hoped would ever remain a secret. The sneer which had accompanied his speech, seemed to convey something more than met the ear, and caused her to feel very uneasy at the interpretation which Henry seemed disposed to put upon her anxiety for their welfare.

Edward, however, with whom neither the earnestness with which she spoke, nor the blush, had passed unregarded, put a construction upon her conduct very different to that she had suspected. From many circumstances, that had lately occurred, he had become almost convinced, that Lord Vaversly entertained a passion for Emily, and imagined that the time was not far distant, (if he had not done it already) when he would disclose to her his attachment, and request her to become his wife.

There appeared no reason to prevent

it. For Lord Vaversly was in the yearly receipt of a large income, arising not only from his estates, but from a considerable sum in the public funds. He had, therefore, in a wife only to look for those amiable qualities, calculated to render the marriage state happy—which Emily, of all the women he had ever seen, in his opinion, possessed.

That if he really loved her, he would consent to throw away his happiness, merely because her birth was not illustrious as his own, was an idea which never crossed his mind: and, even had such a one been for a moment admitted, it would have been as hastily rejected: for he had too good an opinion of Lord Vaversly to suppose, that he would have conducted himself so contrary to his own ideas of right.

If he loved her, therefore, of which, though not certain, he scarcely entertained a doubt, he naturally supposed that by this time, she, most probably,

understood the sentiments with which she had inspired him. And, as he knew her to be disengaged, at least he had never heard any thing to the contrary, he did not suppose it likely, but that an amiable character as was that of his friend, should eventually succeed in obtaining the affections of a sensible young woman like Emily.

With these ideas predominant in his mind, it is natural to suppose that the earnestness, and the blush, were, by Edward, placed to the account of Lord Vaversly. But, as he saw she was confused, by the speech and manner of his brother, he, with his accustomed kindness and respect for the feelings of others, immediately directed their attention to something that was passing in the Park : which, by leading their ideas into another channel, gave Emily sufficient time to recover her self-possession

This action, though apparently trifling, and not even noticed by the rest of the

party, was not lost upon her whom it was intended to benefit. She felt the obligation she was under to him in its fullest force. And, by adding another instance to the general worth of his character, served to impress his image, and his virtues, more deeply and indelibly upon her heart.

She was, however, not sorry, when the dinner-cloth was removed, and they were at liberty to depart to their respective destinations. The young men went on horseback to Richmond, whither they were accompanied by Sir William Maitland; and Olivia and Emily took the road to Clapham.

Mrs. Watkins was by this time returned, and, with her son, welcomed the young people most affectionately: but Olivia, who had, during the whole ride, made it the subject of conversation with Emily—nor was Emily a bit the less anxious on the subject—had no sooner seated herself at the side of her uncle's arm-chair, than

she reminded him of his promise to make an end of his story:

Mrs. Watkins, who knew nothing of the matter, naturally enough enquired,—
“What story it was her uncle had been
“telling her?”

“About Miss Maitland and Lord
“Mortimer;”—answered Mr. Watkins.

“They never heard it before then?”
asked his mother:—“yet I should be
“astonished if they had. Miss Mait-
“land, I know, never liked to speak of
“it, or indeed to hear it mentioned:—
“and, I do not wonder at it!—for it
“never failed to overcome her, and
“make her ill.”

“Let me see!—where was I?”—con-
sidered Mr. Watkins.

“O! I can tell you;”—said Olivia,
quickly—“they were just going to be
“married, you said, when something
“happened.

“O! now I recollect;”—resumed he.
“Well, then, just as they were, as we all

“ thought, on the point of marriage,
“ only waiting, as I told you before for
“ the settlements, Sir William’s youngest
“ child was seized with the measles, or
“ some of them complaints incident to
“ children, which are generally reckoned
“ infectious, and which it so happened
“ that Miss Maitland in her infancy
“ never had had. It was, therefore, judg-
“ ed expedient, according to the opinion
“ of the medical man who attended the
“ child, that she should remove from the
“ house. And as her brother was just
“ then going down to his country seat,
“ on some particular business with one of
“ his tenants, it was proposed that she
“ should accompany him there, for a few
“ days or a week, till his business was
“ settled, and all danger of infection
“ removed.

“ She did not much approve the idea of
“ going into Sussex, it was such a dis-
“ tance from Lord Mortimer; but to have
“ run any hazard of catching a contagi-

“ous disorder, just at this time, too,
“when she was on the point of becom-
“ing his wife, was not to be thought of;
“and, though, at first, she refused to
“accompany her brother, yet every one
“pressed it so earnestly, representing the
“fatal consequences which might other-
“wise ensue—that she, at length, yielded
“to their united persuasions, and went
“down to Melbury with Sir William.

“The child’s disorder was, at this
“time, in the most favourable way, or
“Sir William would have contrived to
“defer his business; but being assured,
“by the Physician who attended it, that
“there was not the least danger to be
“apprehended, he did not think it ne-
“cessary to postpone his journey, and
“accordingly set off, with his sister, on
“the same morning he had first ap-
“pointed.

“At the request of Miss Maitland,
“Lord Mortimer had promised to write

“ to her every day, to give her some information respecting the little sufferer, and he was to call in Park Lane, previously, in order to obtain an accurate account. She parted with him, therefore, with less regret, than she, otherwise, would have done—but, as I have heard you say, mother, with a presentiment of melancholy, as if she knew she should never see him again.”

“ It is very true, Charles ;”—replied Mrs. Watkins, mournfully — “ I have heard her say so frequently. — But, it is many years ago now, since she and I have talked about it.”

“ I did not tell you, mother,”—resumed Mr. Watkins, “ that they met last night at the Playhouse.”

“ Met?—Who ?”—enquired his mother. — “ Not Lord Mortimer and Miss Maitland, sure ?”—But, on being answered in the affirmative, she continued—“ Poor Miss Maitland !—I no longer wonder

“ at her being so much indisposed to
“ day.—Do you know, whether he spoke
“ to her?”

Olivia once more related the occurrences of the meeting; and drew from her auditor many a sigh of commiseration for the wounded feelings of Miss Maitland, whom she loved as a daughter—and not only for those of Miss Maitland, but, likewise of every branch of the family.

“ Well, now I may go on, I imagine?”
— said Mr. Watkins—“ or, suppose mother you finish the story;—you know more about it than I do.”

“ It is a melancholy tale; Charles,” replied she—“ though one, alas! too true. However, if you wish it, I will begin where you left off, and tell these girls, whose curiosity you have no doubt raised, the sad remainder.

“ Three days passed at Melbury,” continued she, “ before they received any intelligence from London, except one

“ short note from Lady Maitland to Sir
“ William, saying, the child was just the
“ same, but, that there was every pros-
“ pect of its doing well:—and, there-
“ fore, begged he would not hurry him-
“ self in returning to town before his
“ business was quite settled—the child
“ being well attended to; as she devoted
“ her whole time to it, and neither left
“ it night nor day.

“ It appeared astonishing to Miss
“ Maitland that she had not yet heard
“ from Lord Mortimer, and was at a loss
“ what motive to assign for his delay. He
“ had promised to write daily; instead of
“ which three days had elapsed, and she
“ had never once received a line from
“ him. Sometimes she fancied that the
“ child must be worse than Lady Mait-
“ land had represented in her letter to
“ Sir William, and that an unwillingness
“ to distress them, by communicating
“ such unwelcome intelligence, was the
“ real cause of his silence. Yet, if

“ even this was the case, she could scarce-
“ ly avoid accusing him of neglect ; for,
“ even then, she thought, he might have
“ contrived to send her a few lines, to
“ relieve the anxiety, which he might
“ naturally suppose she would feel at his
“ continued silence, when he had given
“ her a promise, at parting, to write daily.

“ Then came the idea that he was him-
“ self, perhaps, confined by illness ; and
“ the more she gave way to this opinion,
“ the more probable it seemed. Im-
“ pressed with this conviction, she be-
“ came so seriously uneasy, that she re-
“ solved, if another day passed over, with-
“ out the receipt of a letter, to write to
“ him herself, and beg to know the
“ reason of his long, and unaccountable
“ silence.

“ The next day she was again disap-
“ pointed. The postman came to the
“ house—but there was no letter for her :
“ neither was there one for Sir William ;
“ though he fully expected one, by that

“ morning’s post, from his wife. It seem-
“ ed very strange ! and in no way could
“ they account for it :—had the child
“ been worse, of course they would have
“ let him know. Miss Maitland, however,
“ determined to write, by that night’s
“ post, to Lord Mortimer ; and Sir Wil-
“ liam, also, dispatched one, by the same
“ conveyance to his wife ; desiring her to
“ give him instant information how the
“ child was, and to let him know the
“ reason of her not writing.

“ When these letters were sent off, they
“ were, in some degree easier, expecting,
“ of course, to receive answers to them on
“ the next day, or the day following, at
“ farthest.

“ As Miss Maitland, on her first arrival
“ in the country, had fetched me from
“ my own dwelling, to stay with her during
“ her enforced residence at Melbury—
“ which she usually did, when she came
“ down alone, or with only Sir William—
“ I was there during the whole period of

“ their distress, with which you will short-
“ ly be acquainted. I think its necessary
“ to inform you of this—as it may ac-
“ count for my ability to state the parti-
“ culars more minutely, than it would,
“ otherwise, have been in my power to
“ have done. When I was with them, I
“ believe, they considered me as part of
“ the family: they ever treated me as
“ such: not my lady indeed—she was too
“ flighty, and too much engrossed by
“ self, to bestow much attention upon
“ others—but Sir William and his sister
“ ever appeared to consider me in the
“ light of a mother.

“ On the morning after the letters had
“ been sent, as we were sitting at break-
“ fast in the parlour that faces the lawn,
“ Miss Maitland espied the postman,
“ coming down the avenue from the
“ lodge; and running eagerly to the
“ window, watched him along the path,
“ till she saw him enter the house. In a
“ few minutes, the servant entered, with
“ a single letter in his hand, addressed.

“ to Sir William Maitland, in the well
“ known hand-writing of his steward.”
“ There are none for me then ?” asked
Miss Maitland, in a tone of despondency.

“ It is very astonishing !” continued
she—“ I cannot think the reason of it !”
“ —But she had scarcely spoken these
“ words, before our attention was di-
“ rected to Sir William, who, having
“ read the letter, let it fall suddenly upon
“ the ground, and covered his face with
“ both his hands.

“ What is the matter, William ?” en-
quired his sister, in much alarm, and with
the most affectionate solicitude. “ He
“ was too much overcome to speak—but,
“ shaking his head, as if to denote his
“ inability, pointed to the letter, which
“ laid upon the ground.

“ She instantly snatched it up: and,
“ in it, received intelligence of the death
“ of the poor infant, as communicated
“ by the steward ;”—who said,—“ That as
“ his lady was too much overcome by the

“ recent calamity, to allow her to hold a
“ pen, she had commissioned him to forward to his master the distressing intelligence.

“ On reading the letter, Miss Maitland
“ was nearly as much affected as her brother, at the information it contained.
“ Yet still it relieved her from one sense of uneasiness. For it seemed to offer
“ an apology for the silence of Lord Mortimer; who, she felt assured, had
“ purposely omitted to write to her, that
“ he might not be the relater of such
“ melancholy, such heart-rending intelligence.

“ Yet, though this appeared so satisfactory to her, in accounting for his unusual silence, it had, by no means, the
“ same effect on me. From the very first
“ perusal of the letter, it struck me as
“ something very strange and unaccountable, that, in an affair of so much moment, as the decease of one of his
“ children, my lady should have suffered

“ Sir William to receive intelligence of
“ it, by such an uncertain method of
“ conveyance, as the post. Of course, I
“ should have supposed, that, immedi-
“ ately upon the death of the child, she
“ would have sent off an express to her
“ husband, at Melbury ; which she had
“ done, frequently, to my knowledge,
“ upon very trivial occasions, compared
“ to the present.

“ This, however, at that time, did not
“ seem to strike either Sir William, or his
“ sister ; who were, both, too much en-
“ grossed by the melancholy sadness of
“ the moment, to attend minutely to any
“ thing else.

“ After a short silence, Sir William start-
“ ed up, and ringing the bell,” said—“ He
“ should order the horses to be put to,
“ and set off for London immediately.”
“ His sister instantly proposed to go
“ with him. Against this, however, both
“ Sir William and myself warmly remon-
“ strated.” “ You can do no good, now,”

said he, in faltering accents, “and you
“may happen to catch the disorder.”
“But she still professed the same inclina-
“to accompany him; for her wishes
“strongly impelled her to go to London.
“I then represented to her the fatal ef-
“fects which might arise, on her going
“from the pure air of the country, into a
“house, where the poor little infant was
“just dead, of a disorder professedly con-
“tagious. And her brother so patheti-
“cally depicted the misery he should
“suffer, should she put herself in a situ-
“ation so replete with danger; adding,
“in the most mournful accents—let me
“not also have to mourn for the loss of
“my sister—that she was at once sub-
“dued; and yielded her consent, though
“not unreluctantly, to remain at Mel-
“bury.

“He promised to write immediately
“upon his arrival in London, and give
“her every information he could obtain,
“concerning the object of her affections;

“ who, he conceived, had alone been prevented writing, by the same cause, which herself had assigned as the motive of his silence.

“ The carriage was soon ready ; and in less than half an hour from the first receipt of the steward’s letter, Sir William left us, and travelling post, with four horses, reached Park Lane early in the evening.

“ On entering his own house, he enquired of the porter, (who opened the door to him,) with much tenderness, after his wife, who, he feared, might be quite overcome by the sudden shock of this awful visitation.” “ Isn’t she with you, Sir,” asked the man, in evident surprise. “ With me, Jacob ! — What do you mean ? — I don’t understand you.”

“ My Lady said, Sir,” resumed the porter — “ when she went out this morning, that she was going to you ; for, that now the poor little child was fastened

“ up in its coffin, (which it was obliged
“ to be, Sir, very soon) and she could see
“ it no longer, she could not endure to
“ stay in the house, and should, there-
“ fore, leave town immediately, and go
“ down to you and Miss Maitland at
“ Melbury.”

“ How provoking now this is !”—ex-
claimed her husband.—“ Then we must
“ have passed each other upon the road.
“ I wish she had apprized me of her in-
“ tention !——Did she travel in the
“ coach ?”

“ No, Sir ;”—answered Jacob :—“ as
“ the chariot was down at Melbury, she
“ would not take the coach, she said,
“ only for her and Jenkins, and so hired
“ a chaise in Piccadilly to take her on
“ to Sutton, where they were to change
“ horses.”

“ Heartily vexed at this circumstance,
“ Sir William now went to the library,
“ with the intention of fulfilling his pro-
“ mise to his sister, of writing to her on

“ his first arrival ; but as it was too late
“ for the post that evening, and recollect-
“ ing that she would ere this, most pro-
“ bably, have been informed of every
“ particular by his wife, he resolved to
“ defer writing his letter till the next
“ morning. By that time, too, he natu-
“ rally supposed, he should either have
“ seen or heard something of Lord Mor-
“ timer, as he meant to send to his house
“ immediately, to apprize him of his arri-
“ val in town, and to request to see him.

“ In the mean time he solaced him-
“ self by fondling and caressing his two
“ remaining children, who seemed to
“ have gained a double hold upon his af-
“ fections, since the loss of his youngest
“ darling :—for he had loved them equal-
“ ly—never shewing the least partiality
“ for one more than the other.

“ From the servant who attended
“ them, he learnt many particulars con-
“ cerning the death of his child, with
“ which he was unacquainted ; and ha-

“ving desired her to tell him whatever
“she knew about it, she gave him some-
“thing like the following account.

“The child kept gradually growing
“worse,” she said, “from the time her
“master first set off; but her lady would
“not have him sent for, for fear of alarm-
“ing him. The doctor always would
“have it, it was in no danger. At last
“it got very bad, and cried if any body
“came near it but her lady; so she then
“attended wholly to it herself, at least
“with the assistance of Jenkins, (who
“was her own maid)—and one or other
“of them sat up with it every night.
“However,” continued the girl, “no-
“thing could save it, and so the poor lit-
“tle creature died—and my lady took on
“so, and would not leave the room all
“day, and hardly of a night,—even when
“the poor little dear was in its coffin.
“But when it was obliged to be fastened
“up she could not bear to stay in the
“house any longer, and so, I believe,

“ Jenkins persuaded her to go down
“ into the country, Sir, to you and Miss
“ Maitland.

“ Sir William experienced the most
“ heartfelt pleasure at the account of his
“ wife’s exemplary conduct on this occa-
“ sion, nor was he at all surprised at her
“ excessive grief for the loss of her child.
“ From its very birth, she had appeared
“ to idolize it; whilst her two eldest
“ children were scarcely noticed by her;
“ —and it seemed almost as a judgment
“ inflicted upon her, by God, that she
“ should lose it—for her unjust and cruel
“ partiality.

“ Her husband, as well as your uncle
“ here, always attributed this excessive
“ fondness, to the circumstance of having
“ nursed this child herself; whilst the
“ two eldest had been assigned over to
“ strangers, hired for that purpose. Per-
“ haps it might be so—however, that is
“ not very material;—but she certainly

“ indulged this partiality in a very reprehensible degree.

“ The messenger who had been sent to the house of Lord Mortimer, returned with the information, that his Lordship had that morning gone out of town; but that he had not left word where—or when they might expect him back again.”

“ It was very strange!—Sir William thought. Perhaps, he was, likewise, gone to Melbury.—Every thing, just then, seemed disposed to vex him!—He then enquired, whether Lord Mortimer had called there lately?—Yes; three or four times every day; was the reply.—Did their lady see him?—They believed so; for he generally staid up stairs a considerable time.—It was very odd, he thought, that the servants should not know where their master was gone:—but he considered it most probable that he was gone to

“ Melbury on a visit to his bride-elect,
“ and feeling his mind-harassed, and his
“ spirits fatigued, he retired early to rest.

“ The next morning he wrote two
“ letters to Melbury, one to his wife, and
“ the other to his sister, and sent them
“ forward by a man and horse—saying—
“ that as he concluded Lord Mortimer
“ had by this time joined them, as well
“ as Lady Maitland, he should not leave
“ London himself, till the funeral took
“ place. He gave to his sister merely a
“ brief account of his arrival in London,
“ and of his proceedings respecting Lord
“ Mortimer, who, he supposed, was then
“ with her at Melbury; refering her to
“ his wife for every particular concerning
“ the death of his little darling.

“ You may form some judgement of
“ our surprise and consternation on read-
“ ing these letters, as we had received no
“ tidings whatever, of either of the per-
“ sons to whom he alluded. I do not
“ know how it was, but the truth flashed

“ upon my mind :—though I forbore, out
“ of tenderness to the feelings of my com-
“ panion, to speak my opinion.

“ On the return of the messenger, the
“ surprise of Sir William exceeded, if
“ possible, that of his sister. Lady Mait-
“ land not gone to Melbury!”—exclaimed
he, — “ impossible !—I must surely have
“ made a mistake. He read his sister’s
“ letter over again : it was too true :—
“ she had never been there ; and this was
“ the third day since she had quitted
“ London, with the intention of going
“ there immediately.

“ His first idea was, that she was taken
“ ill upon the road, and this appeared
“ extremely probable, her grief having
“ been so excessive for the loss of her
“ infant. But then, if even that had
“ been the case, Jenkins could easily
“ have informed them of her Lady’s in-
“ disposition.—He knew not what to
“ think :—the more he reflected, the
“ more he was bewildered :—but, at last

“ determined, to send a person, in whom
“ he could confide, to call at every inn
“ on the road, between London and Mel-
“ bury, and make enquiry upon the sub-
“ ject.

“ The intermediate time was passed
“ by him, in an agony of suspense :—and
“ when the person returned from his er-
“ rand, it was increased rather than
“ diminished ;—for he had obtained no
“ tidings of the object of his pursuit.—
“ The people at the several inns had as-
“ sured him, no such person had called
“ there on the day he mentioned, parti-
“ cularly Lady Maitland, whose person,
“ from frequently travelling up and down
“ the same road, was almost generally
“ known.

“ However, it is not necessary to re-
“ late the harassed feelings of Sir Wil-
“ liam, whilst he continued in a state of
“ suspense almost impossible to be sup-
“ ported ; or to detail to you the means,
“ by which he became acquainted with

“ the vile conduct of his wife.—On the
“ morning she had quitted his house,
“ she had eloped with—I suppose you by
“ this time guess, guess who—Lord Mor-
“ timer!--the friend of her husband:—
“ and the man who was on the point of
“ marriage, with that husband’s sister!

“ The time, too, she had chosen for
“ this act of criminality, when the poor
“ infant whom she had pretended to be
“ so fond of, laid dead in the house,
“ aggravated her conduct to a species of
“ guilt, such as was, I should think, never
“ before heard of, and which, one would
“ be almost tempted to believe, impossi-
“ ble.”

“ I know not, exactly, how Sir Wil-
“ liam first gained intelligence of her
“ flight with Lord Mortimer, but it was
“ from a source which did not suffer
“ him even to entertain a doubt as to the
“ truth of it. And when the subject un-
“ avoidably became public, and to be
“ talked of in the family, there was
“ scarcely a servant in the house, who

“ appeared surprised at it ; for they had
“ all, at times, they said, particularly the
“ children’s maid, remarked the indis-
“ creet conduct of their Lady ; and how
“ very improperly she conducted herself
“ to Lord Mortimer, if her husband or
“ Miss Maitland were not present.

“ I had made the same remark my-
“ self, the last time they had all been
“ down together at Melbury ; how bold-
“ ly, and with what levity she conducted
“ herself towards him ! but, I must con-
“ fess, I was entirely deceived in my
“ opinion of him—for, he seemed to me,
“ at that time, studiously to avoid her. —
“ And, though I blushed for her conduct
“ as a married woman, and a mother of
“ children, yet I had too good an opinion
“ of him, to imagine, that he would ever
“ have suffered himself to be overcome
“ by the blandishments of any woman,
“ however fascinating or artful, who was
“ the wife of another—and that other,
“ his most intimate friend.

“ However, I have no doubt, but, that
“ this was, at last, the case—that he was
“ rather the seduced, than the seducer :
“ —that his better judgement was over-
“ powered by her artful fascinations, and
“ her uncommon beauty, to commit a
“ crime the most injurious to the interests
“ of society, and the most heinous to
“ God and man :—for, I am well con-
“ vinced, paradoxical as it may seem,
“ (though the case is not without a paral-
“ lel,) that his affections were devoted
“ to Miss Maitland.

“ Were it not so, he must have been a
“ most finished hypocrite, for he seemed
“ to live but in her presence, when they
“ could talk over the future scenes of
“ happiness they should enjoy together.
“ And, when absent for a short time,
“ his letters, written in that noble, sen-
“ sible style, for which he was so emi-
“ nently distinguished, breathed the
“ purest sentiments of morality and af-
“ fection, undebased by any of that

“ florid language, that flighty nonsense,
“ so frequently addressed by lovers to
“ their mistresses. But he recollected,
“ no doubt, that he was addressing a
“ young woman of sense, to whom that
“ kind of stuff would have been disgust-
“ ing: had he been writing to Lady
“ Maitland, possibly, he might have
“ worded his epistles differently.

“ That a man of this stamp should
“ have suffered himself to be so led
“ away, as to commit a crime of such
“ magnitude, is astonishing! and seems
“ almost incredible! — but it was too
“ true! — and it, unfortunately, fell to
“ my lot to be a witness, to the wide-
“ spreading calamity which this crime
“ occasioned.

“ Sir William almost sunk beneath the
“ stroke; and for the first few days shut
“ himself up in his own apartment, and
“ would see no one. At length, how-
“ ever, he so far gained the ascendancy
“ over his feelings, as to attend the fune-

“ral of his child—for which purpose, he
“came down to Melbury, as the remains
“of the infant were to be deposited in
“the tomb of its ancestors.

“He had loved this ungrateful woman,
“with an affection, at once kind and un-
“deviating; and had lately flattered
“himself with a hope that he should
“shortly see her become every thing he
“could wish her to be. But this sudden
“and total dereliction from every good
“and virtuous principle, aggravated as
“it was by every circumstance that could
“add to the enormity of the offence;—
“just at the time too, when his spirits
“were weakened and his mind subdued,
“by the recent calamity of the child’s
“death; (which appeared to have no
“effect upon its unnatural mother, than
“as it was made as a cloak to cover her
“own wicked intentions) was too much
“for him to support, either with patience
“or equanimity;—and his health sunk
“under the stroke, which had nearly
“bowed him to the earth.

“ On his return to the house, after
“ seeing his child quietly laid in the
“ family vault, he was so ill, as to be
“ obliged to go to bed : from which, for
“ three weeks afterwards, he was never
“ more expected to rise. His disorder
“ was a violent fever ; which, though he
“ happily recovered from it, left him at
“ the end of that time so weak and low,
“ and so unlike what he had been before
“ these unfortunate events had taken
“ place, that he was the mere shadow of
“ his former self.

“ His children had been sent for from
“ London to keep him company, and
“ amuse him in his hours of convales-
“ cence :—but they only served to deep-
“ en his regret, by renewing unpleasant
“ images to his mind, which, it was for
“ his peace that he should forget for ever.
“ However, as his nerves grew stronger,
“ he endeavoured to resist these feelings
“ of depression ; and was so far success-
“ ful, as again to take pleasure in the

“caresses of his innocent children, and
“to be sensible of the blessings he still
“enjoyed, in having these beloved ob-
“jects still left to him.

“Yet, his newly acquired resolution
“was frequently overset, when Edward,
“who was then between seven and eight
“years of age, and who was, even at
“that early period of his life, of a
“thoughtful, contemplative disposition
“—would sometimes awake, apparently
“from a deep reverie, and ask some
“question relative to his mother—and
“what was the reason his father did not
“have her home, especially all the time
“he had been so ill?—Henry, who
“was too young, at that time, to think
“much about it, only said—that as his
“mother went away at the time his little
“sister did, he dared to say they were
“gone to Heaven together.

“It was a long time before Sir Wil-
“liam acquired sufficient strength of
“nerve to listen to this kind of conver-

“ sation, or to answer any of the ques-
“ tions put to him by his eldest son, who
“ was minutely inquisitive upon the sub-
“ ject. He felt assured that something
“ was going wrong in the family, and
“ that whatever it was, it related to his
“ mother—he was accordingly anxious
“ to know, and for this purpose importu-
“ ned his father daily ;—who, unable to
“ answer him, was frequently compelled
“ to send him out of his apartment; and
“ refer him to his aunt or me :—though,
“ it was a subject, on which poor Miss
“ Maitland was as little capable of dwell-
“ ing, as he was himself.”

CHAP. VII.

Of change or chance O let not man complain ;
 Else shall he never, never cease to wail :
 For, from th' imperial dome, to where the swain
 Rears the lone cottage in the silent dale,
 All feel the assault of Fortune's fickle gale.

BEATTIE.

“ **T**HE grief of Miss Maitland upon
 “ this occasion, was less violent than was
 “ that of Sir William, but it was more
 “ deep, and likely to be attended with
 “ more lasting and destructive effects.
 “ For some days after the elopement was
 “ made known to me, I did not reveal it
 “ to her, as I knew not in what words
 “ I should convey to her this distressing
 “ intelligence—this death-blow to all her

“ schemes of future happiness. Her sufferings, however, were so great from the agony of suspense concerning Lord Mortimer, to whom she feared some dreadful accident must have happened, to prevent his writing, that I considered she would suffer less torture, even from the certain conviction of his infidelity, than she was then enduring from the uncertainty she was in respecting him :—and, as it was impossible much longer to have concealed it from her, I, at length, disclosed to her, in as gentle terms as possible, this wretched tale.

“ I shall not attempt to describe her feelings, her agitation, or the variations in her countenance upon this occasion :—it would be in vain :—they could never be delineated, not even, I should think, by the most skilful art of the painter. But, though they cannot be described, yet we may in some degree imagine, the anguish of heart she must

“ have felt, on this certain conviction of
“ the infidelity of her lover;—of that
“ man of whom she had entertained the
“ the most exalted opinion, and given
“ credit to for every virtue:—on whom she
“ had placed her whole affections—and,
“ to whom, she had considered herself
“ as on the point of being united for
“ ever!—I made the recital as short as
“ possible, but she heard me to the end of
“ it, without once interrupting me:—her
“ colour frequently went and came,
“ changing from the deepest crimson, to
“ the most livid paleness, but she neither
“ spoke nor wept.

“ Her silence was, to me, more alarm-
“ ing, than any other kind of grief, how-
“ ever violent. I saw she was inwardly
“ agitated, and I wished to excite her to
“ tears. I spoke of the little infant, in
“ the hope of awakening her compassion;
“ —but she only cast her eyes towards
“ Heaven, and shaking her head, mourn-
“ fully, drew a deep sigh.—I then men-

“ tioned Sir William, thinking that would
“ be likely to occasion the effect I wished,
“ — (as the sorrows of others seldom fail-
“ ed to affect her,)—but this, unhappily,
“ took one contrary to that I expected,
“ for I had no sooner spoke of her bro-
“ ther, than her eyes closed, and she fell
“ from her chair upon the ground, in a
“ state of total insensibility.

“ She was conveyed instantly to bed,
“ but it was a long time before she re-
“ covered. When she did, not a word
“ upon the subject escaped her lips,
“ though she could, evidently, be think
“ ing of nothing else. I begged her to
“ let me sit with her : but she so ear-
“ nestly entreated to be left alone, that
“ I at length yielded to her wishes,
“ though very reluctantly.

“ Until the day of the child’s inter-
“ ment, which brought her brother down
“ to Melbury, she spoke little ; eat less ;
“ and I believe, (if I might judge by her
“ looks in the morning,) never slept at

“all. The meeting with Sir William,
“however, softened her; the sight of
“his grief affected her; and, for the
“first time since she had received this
“heart-rending intelligence, she was
“melted into tears. I was not sorry to
“see her weep, knowing it was the most
“salutary circumstance that could happen
“to her: and, even, her brother’s illness
“was a blessing to her:—for it called off
“her attention from her own sorrow, and
“roused her from that stupor, into which
“she had previously fallen.

“She was his constant attendant. For
“though I repeatedly urged her to con-
“sider her own health, she could seldom
“be prevailed on to leave his bed-side.
“He is the only blessing I have left!”
she would say, mournfully — “except
“you and him, all those I have ever
“loved have been torn away from me.
“There was Lady Vaversly—and now”—
(she was evidently thinking of Lord
Mortimer,) — “but it is no use to repine

“—perhaps, it is better as it is—and I
“have been spared much misery!—
“Yet, my dear Mrs. Watkins—you will
“excuse this weakness—but—it was a
“cruel stroke!—Yet, I will endeavour to
“forget it;—and if poor William does
“but get over this violent attack, we
“may be happy yet.”

“Poor girl!—He did get over it—but
“happiness and she were long strangers!
“—He recovered his equanimity and
“peace of mind much sooner than she
“did. For, though it was a subject on
“which she seldom permitted herself to
“speak, yet I have no doubt, it was ever
“present to her, and by preying inward-
“ly upon her mind, weakened her con-
“stitution, and rendered her frame so
“fragile, that she appeared to every one
“as standing on the confines of the
“grave.

“Her colour had entirely fled—her
“appetite and strength were gone—and
“she appeared only as the skeleton of

“ what she once had been. The Physician
“ who had attended her for a long time,
“ recommended, at last, a change of cli-
“ mate. But of this she would not hear.
“ She wished to die at home, she said,
“ and there was no place where she was
“ so happy as she was at Melbury. There
“ she could wander alone; unattended
“ and unobserved; and she would, in
“ fine weather, pass whole days out of
“ doors: as she frequently declared, that
“ from deep solitude alone, she could now
“ experience any pleasure.

“ She did exactly as she liked: though
“ this indulgence was certainly wrong;
“ for it was calculated to feed the deep
“ melancholy which had taken possession
“ of her soul. Sometimes I ventured to
“ remonstrate with her on this indulgence
“ of her grief—and, as she was ever open
“ to conviction, she would then go, ac-
“ companied by Susan. This was some-
“ thing; for she was at times so weak
“ and low, that I was uneasy at her go-

“ing out by herself, fearing she might
“perhaps, never return. And, many
“times, when I happened to be at Mel-
“bury, (which I very frequently was) I
“have requested this faithful girl to go
“after her mistress, and not lose sight of
“her, in case any thing should happen.

“Contrary to my opinion, however,
“this mode of spending her time was at-
“tended with beneficial effects, for she
“grew much better, and her spirits in
“some degree revived. The medical men
“still advised change of scene, and a
“warmer climate; and, in the course of
“a year or two, receiving a letter from
“your mother, (who had been abroad
“several years.) describing the salutary
“effects she had experienced, by a resi-
“dence in the vicinity of Montpellier,
“and warmly recommending her to make
“a trial of it;—saying—how much she
“wished for such a companion, and
“how happy they should be together;—
“her resolution began to give way; her

“ opposition to going abroad grew fainter
“ and fainter ; and she was at length per-
“ suaded to undertake the journey.

“ Her brother, at first, proposed to go
“ with her, and see her safe there ; but
“ then to return immediately, as he wish-
“ ed not to be separated from his chil-
“ dren. But this she would not agree to.
“ There was some friendly altercation
“ upon this subject ; — but, it was at
“ length decided, by her declaring firmly,
“ — that she would go alone, or not at
“ all.

“ I would have offered ’ my services
“ upon this occasion, but that there were
“ some objections which militated against
“ it. One of these was, that I wished
“ not to quit England, and leave my son ;
“ and the other, (though I ardently de-
“ sired to see my daughter,) yet as I
“ knew her husband’s motive for going
“ abroad at all was to remove her from
“ her relations, was, — that at Montpellier
“ I was sure not to be a welcome visi-

“tor, and might, perhaps, occasion her
“speedy removal from a place, where, as
“she had informed us, she had found so
“much benefit.

“This plan, therefore, was not to be
“thought of; and Miss Maitland went
“alone;—at least, she had Susan for her
“companion, who was considered more
“in the light of a friend, than as a servant,
“having been with her from her infancy.
“She took with her, besides, all her old
“servants, so that though she might be
“said to go alone, yet she was literally
“surrounded by her friends. Sir William
“accompanied her to the sea-side, and
“saw her safe into the vessel, in which
“she first became acquainted with you,
“my dear Miss Emily—and since that,
“you and my grand-daughter know
“more of her adventures than I do my-
“self.”

“And a fortunate acquaintance it was
“for me Madam, I am sure!”—exclaimed
Emily. “How wonderful are the dis-

“pensions of Providence!—Even this
“vile conduct on the part of Lord Mor-
“timer, has been productive of good to
“me:—for, had not Miss Maitland been
“under the necessity of undertaking this
“journey, I should never have met with
“her; and how different would then have
“been my fate!”

“There is seldom any evil, my dear,”
resumed Mrs. Watkins, “that is not ren-
“dered subservient to some good. The
“longer we live in the world, the more
“reason we have to convince us that it
“is so. Beattie, in that beautiful poem,
“The Minstrel, tells us, that—‘Oft from
“‘apparent ills our blessings rise,’—and
“I have long been a convert to Pope’s
“opinion, that—‘Whatever is, is right.’”

“The Minstrel is indeed a beautiful
“poem;” returned Emily; “one discovers
“new beauties in it, on every perusal.
“But, pray Madam,” enquired she, “did
“Miss Maitland never hear any more of
“Lord Mortimer?”

“ She never either saw, or heard from
“ him again, my dear—but, of him, and
“ his worthless partner in iniquity, she
“ has heard too frequently. They went,
“ for a time, into the country, but did
“ not remain there long, for they were
“ soon afterwards seen in London. For-
“ tunately, however, Sir William and
“ them never met. And, as he lost no
“ time in procuring a divorce from this
“ abandoned woman, which left her free
“ to marry whom she pleased, we very
“ soon afterwards saw it announced in
“ the public papers, that she was mar-
“ ried to Lord Mortimer. This second
“ shock, I feared at the time, would
“ have been fatal to Miss Maitland—
“ though it was what we all expected—
“ for the honor of Lord Mortimer, (if
“ he had any left) would, we imagined,
“ prevent him from deserting her whom
“ he had seduced—but she kept her bed
“ a week upon it:—and, after this time,
“ she never suffered his name to pass

“ her lips ; and if any one unguardedly
“ mentioned it in her presence, she was,
“ in general, so much affected, as to be
“ obliged to quit the room,—or, I have
“ known it take such an effect upon
“ her, as to render her in a moment in-
“ sensible.

“ We saw the good-for-nothing crea-
“ ture last night at the play, then,”
said Olivia, “ I dare say. I wonder
“ whether that was her who stared at
“ you so, Emily.”

“ It was Lady Mortimer that you
“ saw,” resumed Mrs. Watkins, “ I
“ make no doubt. They are but lately
“ returned to England, which they
“ thought proper to quit about two
“ years after the affair happened, and
“ have lived, principally, on different
“ parts of the continent ever since.
“ How she could look you all in the
“ face, I cannot imagine !—But she was
“ always, even when a young woman,
“ bold and shameless, and so, I sup-

“pose, she remains now she is older.
“But, you say, Mr. Edward and his
“brother were with you:—It must have
“been a trying scene for them, as well
“as Miss Maitland!—and she must be
“lost to all feeling indeed, if the sight
“of her children, whom she had deserted
“in their infancy, did not strike her
“with, at least, a momentary remorse,
“for her cruel, disgraceful, and un-
“natural conduct.”

“If I was King!”—exclaimed Mr. Watkins, who had not long awoke from a nap he had been taking, during part of the time his mother had been speaking.—“O! if I was King!—I know it should be otherwise!—I would soon teach these ladies of quality a different lesson. I would break them of giving way to these tricks, I warrant ’em!—First and foremost, they should both be stuck up together in the pillory—man and woman too, I would make no dis-

“ tinction—though, I verily believe,
“ ninety-nine times out of a hundred,
“ the woman is the aggressor. At least
“ her crime is the worst. And, if they
“ did get a little pelted, by the indigna-
“ tion of the populace, it would be no
“ more than they richly merited. Then,
“ after they had been made an example
“ of, in this manner, I would have their
“ courage cooled, (they want a little
“ cooling,) by a twelvemonth’s solitary
“ confinement, in some house of im-
“ prisonment. There they would have
“ leisure, ample leisure, to reflect, and
“ come to a proper sense of their mis-
“ deeds; instead of going about, as they
“ are suffered to do now, vitiating the
“ world by their erroneous conduct, and
“ pernicious example. Our laws,” con-
“ tinued he, warmly, “ are shamefully le-
“ nient, or I ought rather to say negli-
“ gent in this particular.”

“ That would be rather too severe,
“ uncle,” cried Olivia,—“ the disgrace of

“ the pillory would be quite sufficient, I think, without the imprisonment.”

“ Disgrace !” repeated he, — “ what do you talk of ?—Do you think they care a fig about disgrace ?—No ;—the very crime they have committed is a plain proof of that.—But, even admitting that they did care about it, why should that be paid any attention to ?—Have they not in the first instance, disgraced, not only themselves, but also their nearest connexions ?—And when it happens, as was the case with this worthless Lady Maitland, that they desert their innocent children, leaving them to the unmerited stigma of having been the offspring of an unnatural and cruel mother, I would then have no mercy on them !—I should consider no punishment as adequate to the offence !—They should, therefore, be subject to the same discipline, to which soldiers are liable, who quit the regiment they have voluntarily entered,

“and, if they desert their post, be sentenced to receive five hundred lashes—”

“Nay, now, uncle,” cried Olivia, “I declare you make me shudder!—Sure! you would not be so cruel!”

“Shudder!” cried he,—“that is what I’d have ’em do:—we should then have a little less of this traffic, to what we have now. I tell you, child, it is a growing evil; and calls for the interference of the legislature to put a stop to it. At present there seems to be an encouragement held out to vice.—A woman marries; grows tired of her husband; selects another: a regular courtship is begun, even in the house of her husband:—the intimacy is discovered; a divorce obtained; and the offending parties are at liberty to marry. Once made an honest woman of (as it is called,) the world, the accommodating world! (of fashion, I mean,) again receives her, but is she the less reprehensible?—Is she a fit companion

“ for our sons and daughters?—Is a wo-
“ man like this, who has acted in open
“ violation of every just and honorable
“ principle, a proper object to be intro-
“ duced to the rising generation?—No:
“ —and I do say it, and will maintain it!
“ that the very admittance of such wo-
“ men as these into virtuous society,
“ (where the vicious ought to be for ever
“ excluded,) however exalted may be
“ their rank, (indeed this only renders
“ their crimes more heinous,) is injurious
“ to the cause of virtue, and is an encou-
“ ragement held out to vice.”

“ It is too true, Sir, indeed;”—observed Emily—“ yet there is still one place where
“ women of this description are never re-
“ ceived; where no person is ever ad-
“ mitted, without that necessary pass-
“ port, an unblemished character ”

“ I know where you mean, my dear,”—
interrupted he, “ the Drawing-room at
“ St. James’s. Yes, yes, the Royal Fa-
“ mily, I will say that for ’em, —that is,

“ I mean the King and Queen, and the
“ Princesses—do still keep up the good
“ old fashion of *selecting* their company :
“ and if vice does at any time intrude, it
“ can only gain admittance by assuming
“ the semblance of virtue. They never
“ encourage any runaway wives, though
“ they may fancy themselves white-
“ washed by being married to another—
“ and the unhappy children of such aban-
“ doned mother’s, may there fearlessly
“ venture, without incurring the hazard
“ of having their feelings wounded, and
“ their indignation excited, by a meet-
“ ing with the worthless female, who, to
“ their great misfortune, was fated to
“ give them birth.”

“ Well, there ought to be some privi-
“ leges attached to going to Court,”—
cried Olivia—“ for it is a disagreeable
“ piece of business, I am sure !—For my
“ own part, I believe, I shall never go
“ there again, unless it is now and then,
“ by chance, purely to oblige Arthur. I

“ hate to be starched out so for nothing,
“ or, at least, only to be stared at !— If I
“ must be at all that trouble of dressing
“ and bedizening myself, I like to have
“ some pleasure for my pains. — And
“ then, only consider, what a waste of
“ money it is !— why, as Emily says, the
“ expence of one Court-dress, would
“ keep a poor family for a twelvemonth.”

“ Emily says so, does she ?” enquired
Mr. Watkins, —“ why, I tell you what,
“ my dear,” addressing Emily more par-
ticularly—“ you and I must be better ac-
“ quainted.”

“ With all my heart, Sir !—but,” added
she, blushing, “ You should not repeat
“ what you and I talk of in private,
“ Olivia.”

“ And why not, my dear ?”—resumed
he. “ Such sentiments as these you
“ have no reason to be ashamed of ;—
“ they do you honour.”

“ To be sure they do ;”—said Olivia,
“ who was always ready to join in the

“ praises of her friend — and if I did
“ not turn informer now and then,
“ no one would ever be the wiser for
“ them. So you ought to make me one
“ of your best curt’sy’s, Madam Emily,
“ I think, instead of scolding me.”

Emily was going to reply, when the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of the servant, bringing in the tea-tray, and the discourse was speedily diverted into a different channel. Olivia insisted upon relieving her grand-mother, by presiding at the tea-table, and an hour or two passed away so pleasantly, between the sensible, well-informed conversation of Mrs. Watkins, and the good-humoured kindness of her son, that when the carriage came for them, to carry them back again to Park Lane, each was astonished at the lateness of the hour.

Promising soon to repeat their visit, they, for this time bade them farewell; leaving both Mr. Watkins and his mother, enraptured with their easy, unaffected

ed manners, which, without the least tincture of either levity or boldness, were cheerful and pleasing; and, in the opinion of both lady and gentleman, just what those of young women ought to be.

During their ride home, the conversation naturally turned upon the melancholy tale they had been listening to. “What
“a wretch,” cried Olivia, “was this Lady Maitland, this mother of poor Henry!—Ah! he might well change colour
“last night when he saw her!—I
“thought at the time, something very
“astonishing must be the matter, to
“call a blush into his cheek.—Edward,
“now, frequently changes colour—but
“last night, poor fellow! he seemed to
“have none to change, for he was as
“pale as ashes, and looked the very picture
“of despair. Did not you remark
“it, Emily, as we sat at supper?”

“O, yes!”—replied Emily, mournfully—“poor Edward!—well might he
“quit the box!—yet, I blamed him for

“ leaving us. — How cruelly must his feel-
“ ings have been hurt, to see the wife of
“ his father — his own mother ! — for
“ though her desertion of him and his
“ brother, and her highly reprehensible
“ conduct, have forfeited all claim to
“ his affection, yet she is still his mother !
“ — and to see her thus unblushingly
“ exhibiting herself, during the life-time
“ of his father, publicly as the wife of
“ another, must have cruelly lacerated
“ his feelings.”

“ I do not wonder, now,” cried Olivia,
“ that he is so frequently severe upon the
“ women !——Little did I think, when I
“ have rallied him upon it so often, that
“ he had had so much cause to wish that
“ females were more guarded in their con-
“ duct, or more particular, as to whom
“ they admitted into their society. — Ah !
“ I never shall be angry with him any
“ more ! — But, do not you think it odd,
“ Emily, that we never heard of these
“ events before ?”

“ Not at all. For, who, my dear Olivia, that had been so unfortunate as to have any circumstances of this nature happen in their family, would wish to speak of them?—Ah, no! they would naturally wish to have them buried in oblivion. Therefore, let us be particularly guarded never to speak of it; let us never even drop a hint that such a subject has reached our ears. It is very evident they did not wish us to know it, or we should have been informed of it before this; and perhaps was it to come to their knowledge that we were acquainted with the melancholy history, it would only add another wound to the many, which their feelings must already have endured.”

“ I will be careful, you may depend upon it;”—said Olivia—“ I will be as silent as the grave upon the subject: but I suppose I shall some day or other be entrusted with the secret, when I become the wife of Henry. I shall

“ have no reserves with him, and, I trust
“ he will have none with me. For I
“ mean to live as happy as the day is
“ long, and that Henry Maitland and his
“ wife shall serve as models for all married people.”

Emily sincerely wished that Olivia might find these flattering prospects realized, but she was afraid they would turn out merely visionary. For, she thought, her future husband was very little calculated to serve as a model to others, in any department of life, much more in that of a husband:—but speaking from the real sentiments of her heart, she immediately replied—“ I am sure, my dear Olivia, it will not be your fault if you are not.”

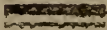
Olivia was of that happy temperament, that sanguine disposition, that believes every thing will turn out as they wish it to be. She never anticipated evils: particularly in this instance. For love had rendered her so blind to the failings of

her lover, that she thought him the most amiable, worthy young man that ever existed. She knew no one that excelled him. His brother Edward indeed she allowed to be equally worthy, but as to agreeableness or pleasantness, Henry, in these points, she thought, was greatly his superior.

Thus judged Olivia. But every one did not coincide with her in opinion, nor did Emily. With the latter Henry was by no means a favourite ; but Edward—was a most distinguished one !—she considered him as an ornament to human-nature.

Henry was frequently careless and inattentive to Emily, sometimes bordering upon rudeness : but Edward ever treated her with the kindness of a brother—nor was he indeed capable of behaving rudely to any one. The worthiness of his general character, the many opportunities which living under the same roof with him, afforded her, of being witness to a

thousand instances of his amiability of manners, his extreme goodness of heart, and his uniform kindness and attention to the feelings of others, had made so deep an impression on her heart, that, for some time past, her affections had been wholly his. — But, as she knew his decided resolution was, never to marry, she resolved to bury the secret within her own bosom, and not to mention it, even to Miss Maitland, who was, except in this instance, the faithful repository of her every thought.



CHAP. VIII.

Thus the maid——

Whom love deludes into his thorny wilds
Through flow'ry tempting paths, or leads a life
Of fever'd rapture, or of cruel care ;
While anxious doubt distracts the tortur'd heart.

THOMSON.

UPON their arrival at home, they went up stairs immediately to the dressing-room of Miss Maitland, where they had the pleasure of finding her much recovered, her head-ache having, for the last hour or two, considerably abated.

They congratulated her upon the prospect of amendment—and she assured them she felt so much recovered, that she was half inclined to go down with them to supper. However, being not yet quite

free from her troublesome companion, she gave up the idea, fearing, that if she did go, she should perhaps bring her complaint on worse again, or prove as a bar to the mirth of the young people, who, she knew, would check their hilarity out of compliment to her feelings.— Being so much recovered, however, Emily and Olivia offered to bear her company in her dressing-room:— which was at first declined: but, at length, the pressing entreaties of the former, induced her to comply with her wishes; and it was, at last settled, that Emily should remain with Miss Maitland, whilst Olivia went down stairs to sup with the party below.

They continued all three together in the dressing-room, for Miss Maitland being now able to converse, though still very languid from the effects of the intense pain she had suffered during the day, they passed an hour before the gentlemen returned, in pleasing, and instructive conversation.

At length a loud knock at the door, and a correspondent ring of the bell, announced the return of the party from Richmond. It was near the hour of supper, and Olivia, starting up, said—“she
“would now go down stairs, and see
“if they had all come home again in a
“whole skin. For, you must know, I
“much doubt it;” continued this lively girl—“and I did not much relish this
“trial of horses, I can tell you!—but
“men will do as they like, that is the
“worst of them!—There is no persuad-
“ing them to any thing!”

“You will sup down stairs, then, my
“dear—will you?” asked Miss Maitland, in a tone which seemed to imply, that she had rather she would do so.

“O, yes; with all my heart! and then
“I shall hear all about this excursion of
“theirs. I would lay any wager, now,
“they have not been entertained half so
“much as we have;—do you think they
“have, Emily?—However, I will go and

“ask them.”——So saying she left the dressing-room, closing the door after her very softly, that the noise might not affect Miss Maitland, or renew her headache; and then humming a tune, tripped down stairs gaily, to the apartment where the family usually supped.

When Miss Maitland and Emily had partaken of a slight repast, they drew their chairs close to the fire, and in sensible and interesting converse passed another hour most pleasantly. The door then suddenly opened, and much before the time they had expected her, entered Olivia. “Make room for me,”—cried she, — “for here I am again, you see, “come to enjoy a little rational chat for “half an hour, for I am quite weary of “the conversation I have been obliged “to listen to, down stairs; which has “been nothing else but a dissertation “upon horses.—I declare, I could not “edge in a word !”

“But, are they all returned home safe?” asked Emily, anxiously.

“ O, yes ; I dare say they are !—but
“ I did not asinslem : for, as I tell you,
“ they all talked so fast, there was no
“ room for me to get in a word.—How-
“ ever they don’t seem to me, to be a
“ bit the worse for it, for they have nei-
“ ther lost their tongues, nor their appe-
“ tites, so that is a good sign : for to
“ see them eat at supper, you would have
“ supposed they had not had a meal be-
“ fore for a month.”

“ They did not behave very politely
“ to you, indeed my dear Olivia,”—said
Miss Maitland,—“ considering, too, you
“ was the only lady in company.”

“ That was the reason I was so dis-
“ appointed,”—resumed she. “ There,
“ thought I to myself, as I went down
“ stairs, I shall be made so much of, as
“ there is only me ; but, instead of that,
“ they were so taken up with their sad-
“ dles and their cruppers, that I verily
“ believe, if I had not begun to cough as
“ loud as I could, when I got inside the

“ parlour door, they would neither of
“ them have found out that I was there.
“ To be sure, they did then vouchsafe to
“ turn round and speak to me, and Ed-
“ ward, I believe, did go so far as to ask
“ after Miss Maitland, and so they did
“ all, then, if I recollect. Edward like-
“ wise asked, whether indisposition de-
“ tained you from the supper-table, and
“ looked pleased to find, that you only
“ staid up stairs to keep his aunt com-
“ pany. Henry, too, I believe, did just
“ place me a chair at the table—but
“ when I was going to ask any particular
“ question, or tell them any thing about
“ where we had been, I was sure to be
“ cut short in a moment, by the beauty of
“ Henry’s new mare, who, if you was to
“ believe all they said about it, was such
“ a one as never was seen before.—To
“ have heard them, you would have taken
“ every one of them for horse-dealers,
“ stable-keepers, or jockies ;—and, if I
“ had been so inclined, I might have

“ gained much information in the science
“ of horsemanship. — But, to say the
“ truth, I began to be tired of it; so
“ when Arthur was beginning a long
“ history of the birth, parentage, and
“ education of this lady—(who, I hope,
“ won’t serve him a jade’s trick, and
“ break his neck—) I got up, and mak-
“ ing them one of my best curt’sies, told
“ them, that I was weary of their con-
“ versation, and should therefore leave
“ them to trot and gallop the ground
“ over again by themselves. They look-
“ ed astonished—but I do verily believe,
“ in their hearts were fairly glad to
“ get rid of me; for during the whole
“ time I was with them, their tongues
“ never laid still, but galloped as fast as
“ their horse’s feet, and every word they
“ spoke, was upon the subject of this
“ lady mare.”

“ You are determined to make up for
“ lost time, I find,”—said Miss Mait-
land, smiling: — “ but come, neve-

“mind them, we will make room for
“you here.” So saying, she drew back
her own chair, that Olivia might bring
her’s forward; and, after a little time
spent in sociable and friendly chat, they
bade Miss Maitland good-night, and
retired—each, to her own apartment.

On going into her room, Emily looked
at her watch; it was earlier than her
usual hour of retiring to rest; and not
feeling at all sleepy, she determined not
yet to go to bed, but to amuse herself
for half an hour longer, by reading.
Having selected a book, from some book-
shelves, which hung in her chamber, she
drew her chair close to the fire, and be-
gan to read.

She had not proceeded many pages,
ere she fancied that the book she had
chosen was not an entertaining one, and
replacing it upon the shelf, took down
another. This met with the same re-
ception—and a third was selected. Yet
she could not please herself; and won-

dering what was come to her, she turned the book down upon a little table that stood before her, and leaning her head upon her hand, whilst her elbow rested upon the table, fell into a reverie, of which Edward was the principal object.

“He missed me then,”—said she, mentally—“and enquired kindly after me:”—the idea gave her extreme pleasure.—
“But what then?”—added she, mournfully—“is he not thus kindly attentive to every one?—Ah yes!—I must be vain, indeed! to imagine that his attention to me, proceeds from any other motive than his usual philanthropy:—besides, even if it did, I know he is determined never to marry:—and since I have heard the melancholy tale of his mother’s frailty, I am no longer surprised, that he should form such a resolution. He may well dread the meeting with a wife, who might, perhaps, follow her example. Yet it is a pity, too!—such a husband as he would

“ make !—Domestic and amiable as he
“ is, it is much to be regretted that he
“ should not appear, (and if he did ap-
“ pear, he would be sure to shine,) in
“ the characters of husband and of father.
“ —Perhaps, — it is possible — that he
“ may be induced to change his resolu-
“ tion—yet—not for me ! not for the un-
“ known Emily !—She would never be
“ deemed a proper match for him, even
“ if such a change was to take place.
“ The eldest son of Sir William Maitland
“ —ah no !—It is very unlikely that any
“ family would be willing to receive me
“ as a part of it, unless I could arrive at
“ some certainty respecting my birth.
“ I must then for ever remain single.
“ But that is a circumstance I shall not
“ regret—for where should I meet with
“ another, who possesses the virtues of
“ Edward Maitland.”

She continued for some length of time deeply engaged in these kind of reflections, sometimes almost admitting a

hope that Edward viewed her with partiality, and the next moment severely blaming herself for giving way to such a suggestion. She, therefore, wisely came to a determination to avoid him as much as possible; for whilst she was daily witnessing his good actions, and receiving fresh proofs of his amiability of disposition, she felt assured, that, instead of eradicating her affection for him, it would only gain strength daily. How to do this, was the most difficult affair, living, as she did, in the same house with him:—but she determined to attempt it; her peace of mind demanded it:—and she resolved, when he was at home, to pass as much time as she could, (without appearing particular to the rest of the family, to whom, as well as the object of it, she wished her partiality ever to remain a secret,) in her own private apartment.

Buried in these kind of reflections and resolves, time flew unheeded by her, and

the watchman calling—past one—reminded her how late it was. She started up instantly, and was astonished to find that nearly two hours and a half had elapsed since she had first entered her apartment. She made as little noise as possible in undressing herself, and putting out her fire, fearing that if any of the family should chance to be awake and hear her, they might be alarmed, and fancy she was ill—and carefully placing her night-lamp upon the table, from the same motive, went to bed, though it was some hours longer before sleep weighed upon her eyelids.

On the following morning the health of Miss Maitland was so far restored, as to enable her to take her usual seat at the breakfast-table; though her spirits were still evidently depressed; for she had not yet recovered the shock of her sudden and unexpected meeting with Lord and Lady Mortimer. Her melancholy was, however, by Sir William, solely attri-

buted to her malady of the day before ; but the young people, who had been witnesses to her emotion, and who all knew, now, from whence it had proceeded, deeply commiserated the feelings which such a meeting must inevitably have drawn forth, and were unusually silent, from motives of sympathy, during their whole repast.

Sir William, who was the only one unacquainted with the secret cause of his sister's indisposition, rallied the young ones upon their taciturnity, particularly Olivia, who was seldom to be found fault with for being too silent. But all would not do : for with all his good-humoured pleasantry he could scarcely raise a smile, even upon her face, laughingly inclined as she generally was.

Edward was again evidently affected. The melancholy which sat upon his aunt's countenance had communicated itself to his ; and as Emily, who sat opposite to him, caught a glance of it now and

then, she discovered on it a look of anguish, which plainly indicated, that the subject on which he was pensively ruminating, was, the frail conduct of his mother.

At the conclusion of this solemn meeting, for such it really had proved, Edward and Henry left them: and Sir William proposing a ride, as likely to benefit his sister, whose looks betrayed the sadness that reigned within, the females accompanied him in an airing to Epping Forest; and when they returned, the spirits of the whole party seemed infinitely benefited by the excursion.

At dinner they were again joined by the young men; and when the cloth was removed, and the servants withdrawn, Henry said—"That, at last, he believed, " the settlements were nearly finished; " for that he had called, that morning, " upon the attorney who was preparing " them, who had given him his promise, that they should be ready for

“ signing, in three days time at farthest.
“ Now then, Olivia,”—added he—“ we
“ have no other cause for delay; and
“ you have nothing else to do, but
“ to fix an early day for our mar-
“ riage.”

“ We will talk that matter over ano-
“ ther time,”—cried Olivia, blushing at
his thus entering upon the subject in the
presence of the whole family:—“ it will
“ be time enough to do that, when we
“ have received these papers you talk
“ of.”—

“ This is a subject,”—observed Miss
Maitland—“ which will be best settled
“ between yourselves.”

“ And when you have come to a de-
“ termination, good folks,”—cried Emily,
“ I suppose you will announce the mat-
“ ter in form, and let us know.”

She said this gaily, with the kind in-
tention of relieving the confusion of Oli-
via; but she feared more and more, as
the character of Henry disclosed itself to

to her view, that, with such a husband as he was likely to make, her friend stood but little chance for happiness. — “How unlike his brother!” — she would say to herself — “but, indeed, how few young men are there to be met with, who at all resemble him!” — Then recollecting the resolution she had formed of erasing his image from her heart, she would heroically endeavour to fix her thoughts upon some other subject. But it was of no avail: — by the time she had succeeded in withdrawing them from him, some remembrance would intrude, or she would hear of some good action he had performed, which rivetted her affections more strongly than ever.

The attorney kept his word; the settlements were sent home by the time appointed; — and Henry, who was eagerly solicitous to have the affair concluded, pressed so earnestly for an early day, that Olivia, who had not the least particle of affectation, was easily induced to comply

with his request; and, accordingly, made choice of one, at just a fortnight from the present period.

When this determination of the lovers was made known to the family, it created no slight degree of bustle in the household of Sir William: for even the servants were full of joy and animation, at this near prospect of a wedding. Emily and Olivia had sufficient employment in selecting the different articles of dress, which would be necessary upon this occasion: though this was attended with no great difficulty; for being, fortunately, possessed of the main article—money—they had only to consult their taste, and order such and such things to be sent home.

The milliners, to be sure, were a little hurried, but this is so common a case among them, that they heeded it not: and, it has been before observed, that when their pressure of business is occasioned by the preparation of bridal finery.

and habiliments, they work with double diligence, and partake, in some degree of the pleasure, which the circumstance may be supposed to inspire, in the bosom of their employer.

Madeline was nearly out of her wits with joy. "It was such a pleasure,"—she said—"to have a wedding going on in the family; for when one happened, it was sure to be followed by another.—" "So, I suppose, Miss Emily," continued she, "that it will be your turn next—or mine, perhaps, who knows!—for every thing of this sort goes by Fate!—If I am to be married, I am; and nothing can prevent it. O! it must be so comfortable to have a husband to tell all one's troubles to; and to take one's part, if any one affronts one."

"But it sometimes happens, Madeline,"—observed Emily—"that a husband only increases a woman's troubles."

"O! do you think so, Miss Emily?"

—cried Madeline, quickly—“O, dear!
“I never can think that. I hope and
“trust, that it will not be my fate to
“live and die an old-maid! for I should
“be very unhappy if I thought it
“was.”

“Why, do you wish to leave me then?”
enquired her mistress.

“Holy Virgin!—no—the very thought
“of it would break my heart!—O! Miss
“Emily, how could you suppose I would?
“—when I could not love you better if
“you was my own sister: no, nor so
“well neither: for what a little girl you
“was, when I first come to wait on you,
“and be your maid.—Ah! don’t you
“remember France?—and our own vil-
“lage of Raimondi?—and Madame St.
“Valery, and the ghost, and the vintage,
“and all them things as happened when
“we lived there long ago?—Ah! some-
“times I wish we were there now!—
“Don’t you, Miss Emily?”

“ No, really, Madeline, I do not. I
“ know too well when I am well off, to
“ wish myself in France again.”

“ Ah, well !—to be sure, I forgot that !
“ —But only I was just then thinking of
“ father and mother—I often think about
“ them, Miss Emily, till the tears comes
“ in my eyes; and yet after all I don’t
“ know what I’m crying for.” Her appearance at this time justified her assertion, for the drops trickled down her cheeks. Hearing a footstep on the stairs, however, she wiped away her tears, saying—“ But here comes Miss Vaversly,
“ and if she was to see me crying, perhaps she would take it ill of me, or
“ think I was envious of her going to be
“ married, or some bad thing or other.
“ And I should not like her to think so
“ of me, I am sure. Besides, I’m no
“ such a thing; for I am as glad at her
“ going to be married to Mr. Henry as
“ any thing—aye, almost as much as

“if I was going to be married myself
“ever so!”

Olivia now entering the apartment, Madeline soon forgot her sorrow; and having finished the toilette of Emily, which had been her employment during the time she had been speaking, went immediately down stairs, leaving her mistress and her friend to converse together on Olivia's approaching change of name and condition.

It was the wish of this amiable young woman that Emily should reside with her. But this Emily herself declined. However her own inclination might point that way, she thought it would be a species of ingratitude to her benefactress, even to propose such a scheme. True, it would second her wish of avoiding Edward; but even from this separation her heart revolted. She, therefore, requested Olivia would not mention it to the family, fearing they might perhaps imagine,

that her own wish had been to quit them.

As it was not probable that their places of abode would be far distant, she represented to Olivia, how easily they might manage to spend a great part of their time together, though not inmates of the same house: and that she could stay now and then a week with her, or longer, without militating from that duty and attention she owed to her beloved friend, and more than parent, Miss Maitland.

Olivia yielded to the better judgement of Emily, though she said—"she should miss her sadly. That she should want to ask her opinion and advice, on a thousand occasions."

"You will then, my dear Olivia have an adviser in your husband,"—observed Emily.

"Yes; I know that:—I shall always ask his advice:—but I shall sadly want you, Emily!"

The dinner bell rang, which interrupted

their conversation: — and when their meal was concluded, and the servants withdrawn, Henry proposed a final arrangement of their plans for the wedding day.

It was at length agreed upon, that the young couple should, after the ceremony, proceed alone to Melbury Park, to spend the honey-moon, according to the established etiquette of the present day. But with this difference—that they should be accompanied by the family as far as Reigate, where they should all dine; and that, afterwards, Henry and Olivia should proceed on their journey to Melbury; and the rest of the party either return to town that night, or remain there, as they felt disposed, till the next morning.

There had been no house as yet provided exclusively for the bride and bridegroom, though they had been for sometime in search of one; but finding a difficulty in meeting with one to their

liking, they determined to be in no hurry about it, but rather to put up with a ready-furnished one, than take any of those they had happened to see. On their return from Sussex, therefore, such a one was to be provided; but, till then, they had not thought it necessary to trouble themselves about it.

The day at length arrived, which had been appointed for the ceremony to take place, and in the parish church of St. George's, Olivia gave her hand to Henry. They were accompanied to the altar only by Emily, Edward Maitland, and Lord Vaversly; who gave the hand of his sister into that of her future husband, not without a considerable degree of reluctance.

He feared the alliance she had formed was not one that would add to her felicity, as the character of Henry was not to be depended upon, either for stability or good temper. He had more than once

offered her his opinion on this subject, (for he was deeply interested for her welfare,) and as far as laid in his power, represented to her, how small a chance she stood for happiness, with a young man of his disposition.

Olivia, however, judged differently. She fancied her brother entertained prejudices against Henry, from an idea that she might have settled higher in life, than to marry only the younger son of a baronet; and could by no means be induced to receive the conviction, that he really had any of those failings, which Arthur had so forcibly pointed out to her.

Finding that all he could say was of no avail: that all his representations and admonitions were attended with no effect; he, at last, gave up the point as hopeless, and suffered her, without further comment, to do as she thought proper.— Taking care, however, that two thirds of

her property should be secured to herself, and any children she might have by the marriage.

On their return from the church, Sir William warmly congratulated his new daughter, and said,—“ He hoped and “ trusted she would resemble her mother “ in conduct, as much as she did in person.” She laughingly answered, “ that “ she intended to be held up as a model “ for good wives ; and Henry, I hope, “ has made the same resolution,” added she, “ in his department,—for a good “ husband they say makes a good wife at “ any time.” Sir William sighed as the reflection crossed his mind, that this was not always the case ; he, having been a melancholy instance to the contrary.—But, unwilling to check the vivacity of his new daughter, he endeavoured to subdue all unpleasant recollections, though the remembrance of former days would intrude : and when he thought of his own early prospects, and how fatally they

had been blasted, he could not avoid feeling a sensation of sadness, which sometimes cast a shade over his countenance, and which baffled all his endeavours to repel.

Being joined by Sir William and his sister, the family party then proceeded, by appointment, to the house of Mr. Watkins, at Clapham, where, by his express desire, they were to stop, on their way to Reigate, and partake of a cold collation. Mrs. Watkins, the grand-mother of the bride, was likewise to accompany them to dinner; as, on such a particular occasion, her son said, “he would
“dispense with her attendance, and endeavour to do without her until the
“next day,”—at the same time regretting his lameness, which incapacitated him from making one, on this joyful occasion, himself.

He expressed himself highly delighted at this visit; though he told them, he did not approve of their going down to

Melbury, and shutting themselves up in the country for a month. "It is enough
"to make people tired of one another," added he, "at the first setting off. They
"managed these matters differently in
"my youthful days. But I suppose it's
"the fashion!—so, you must comply
"with it, whether you like it or no." He was then full of his jokes on the young people, and congratulated the new married couple over and over again. "So
"then, my dear," said he, turning to Emily, "they don't take you with them, eh?—They leave you quite in the lurch, I think. However, never mind it; "your turn will come next:"—and caused her no slight degree of confusion, when he added,—"Come, suppose I
"make a match between you and one of
"these young men here,—which will
"you have?—My nephew, or Mr. Edward?"

Neither of the three persons concerned in this address were totally unembarrass-

ed; for both Lord Vaversly and Edward, as well as Emily, betrayed evident symptoms of confusion.

“Don’t blush about it, my dear;”—resumed Mr. Watkins,—“you could not make a better choice, than either of them would be; so, come, tell me honestly now, which of them would you like best?”

At this question so pointedly addressed to her, the blushes of Emily increased to a painful degree; and hesitating, she scarcely knew what to answer. Olivia, however, with that ready good nature, which formed so distinguished, and amiable a trait in her character, hastened to relieve her, by quickly replying,—“Do you think us girls ever tell these kind of secrets to you old married men?—No, indeed!—and as to the young ones, why, it is their place to find out, whether we like them or not. And to say the truth, they are in general pretty quick-sighted in such cases; for I can

“tell you they are seldom deficient in the
“article of vanity.”

Though this was said at random, and intended merely as a relief to Emily ; there were some parts of her friend's speech, which cast a damp over the spirits of her, whom it was so kindly meant to oblige. If there was any truth in the assertion of Olivia, that men were indeed so quick-sighted in cases of this nature, she trembled to think that, perhaps, the secret which she guarded so carefully, might already have been discovered by the object who inspired it; and from whom it was her ardent wish that it should be concealed for ever!—She was sensible, that in many instances, she had almost unconsciously betrayed it; but still indulged a hope that it was, hitherto, undiscovered, and flattered herself that she should still be able to confine it, to the secret recesses of her own bosom.

This assertion of Olivia's, therefore,

caused her the utmost uneasiness.—
“Should he have discovered it,” thought she — “should he suspect that I have
“been so imprudent, as to give away my
“affections, unasked and unsolicited,
“what an idea would he entertain of me !
“—I should, to a certainty, forfeit, for
“ever, his good opinion!—Ah! let me
“hope I have been more fortunate!—
“To give them, too, to one, whom I
“have so repeatedly heard declare his
“resolution never to marry. I know
“not how it has happened that I have
“thus ridiculously enthralled myself:
“—it was very silly!——But I will
“strenuously exert myself to subdue
“this hopeless affection, or it will
“embitter every moment of my fu-
“ture life.”

These resolutions, though highly laudable, were more easily formed than executed:—and whilst these harassing reflections passed across her thoughts, her countenance wore a look of sadness,

which ill accorded with bridal festivity, and which fully betrayed to her fond maternal friend, that some secret uneasiness lay concealed within the bosom of her favourite, with which she was as yet unacquainted.

This was not the first time such an idea had occurred to her; or she would have imagined that it only proceeded, perhaps, from the near prospect of parting with her youthful companion:—but having made many observations of the same kind lately, she was convinced, that the look of sadness, which was now frequently depicted upon the countenance of Emily, proceeded from a far deeper source, than the mere parting with Olivia.

She had frequently felt an inclination to speak to her upon the subject, but had hitherto been withheld from the fear of adding to her distress, whatever it might be; and from a latent hope, that Emily would first introduce the subject, herself. But having now waited some-

time, in the vain expectation of her mentioning it, whenever they happened to be alone together, she resolved, that if Emily remained much longer silent, she would herself question her, as to the cause of her evident uneasiness and depression.

Sometimes a suspicion nearly bordering on reality had crossed the mind of Miss Maitland, and Emily's confusion of this morning had given strength to the surmise. But whether, if it was so, her attachment was to her nephew Edward, or to her acquaintance Lord Vaversly, she could in no way ascertain:—but it more than ever determined her, to take an early opportunity of speaking to her, seriously, upon the subject.

Though the speech of Olivia had created many a pang in the conscious bosom of poor Emily, it had the effect she wished upon the other part of the company, by calling off their attention from the blushing countenance of her

friend, and fixing it more immediately upon herself and Henry ; between whom there had arisen a contest ; for Henry had entered the lists with her in defence of his sex, against the accusation of vanity, with which she had charged them.

Her spirits did not desert her, even upon this her wedding-day :—a day, which must either marr, or secure her happiness for her whole life !—But it must be accounted for in this way : as she never anticipated evil, hers were all joyous prospects ; she saw no distant clouds as likely to obscure the present felicity :—and she firmly believed, that in a marriage with the object of her affections, to whom, she, at least, gave credit for every virtue, her happiness was secured for ever.

This disposition, (of which there are so many) is a most happy one to its possessor :—for though they must inevitably experience frequent disappointments, yet who is there that has not felt, how much

less any evil has appeared, when it has actually come upon them, than it has seemed to the imagination, during the time it was anticipated?

When they had finished their morning's repast, they prepared to take leave of their hospitable entertainer, who once more regretted his inability to make one among them. As they were just on the point of quitting the apartment, he called to Olivia, who was already half-way down the stairs, and begging her to return, said — "he had a present for her, " which he had very nearly forgot to " give her." She instantly came back again. And his mother having by this time produced it from a drawer in the apartment, where it had been placed in readiness for the occasion, he gave it into her hand, saying — "that he hoped " it would please her, and that it would " last her all her life."

It was curiously wrapped up in silver paper.

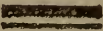
“What can it be?”—said she, feeling it as she held it in her hand.—“Is it your picture, uncle?”

“Open it, and you will see, Mrs. Maitland;”—answered he, nodding sagaciously. “Perhaps it has never occurred to you, that you may want such an article: so, you see, I have provided it for you, and then you will have one in readiness.”

She was eager to see what the paper contained, and unfolding it, was somewhat disappointed, though she could not forbear smiling, when she perceived it was a silver pap-boat.

This act of pleasantry on the part of Mr. Watkins, caused a general laugh; but as they had no time to lose, having ordered the dinner rather earlier than their usual hour, the party now bade him farewell, and, with a profusion of good wishes on his part, proceeded on to Reigate. Here they dined. After which they separated:—the bride and bride-

groom pursuing their original plan of going on to Melbury ; where they were to be followed by the whole family in the course of a fortnight :—and the rest of the party remaining at the inn, which they did not mean to quit until the following morning.



CHAP. IX.

Now the soft hour
 Of walking comes: for them who lonely love
 To seek the distant hills, and there converse
 With Nature;—————Social friends,
 Attuned to happy unison of soul;
 To whose exalting eye a fairer world,
 Of which the vulgar never had a glimpse,
 Displays its charms.

THOMSON.

IN the cool of the evening, the party who were left at the inn, amused themselves by wandering over the ancient town of Reigate. Where they found little to engage their attention, till, having ascended the hill at the further extremity of the place, they came to the pleasant village, if such it may be called, of Woodhatch.

This sweet spot, lying on a declivity, consists of not more than six or eight houses, placed at convenient distances, and pleasantly interspersed with meadows, gardens, and shrubberies; whilst from those houses, situated near the top of the hill, may be seen an extensive prospect, of varied and delightful scenery, bounded by a chain of downs, at a distance of nearly fifteen miles.

A beautiful evening at the latter end of May, served to shew every object in its most attractive colours. And as the party stopt on the brow of the hill, when, after walking up a dusty lane, this sweet prospect first opened to their view, the wide extent of landscape formed so decided a contrast to the narrow, contracted road, from which they had just emerged, that it gave additional charms to the picturesque and beautiful scenery, which lay widely stretched out before them.

Having continued some time in eager

admiration of the beauties of this delightful spot, they left their elevated station, and descended into the valley—passing, as they went along, the few houses, mostly inhabited by wealthy traders, who, having acquired a fortune by their industry, have selected this rural situation to repose in, after a life of bustle, amid the hurry and confusion of London.

Having sauntered through the village, they were again ascending towards the brow of the hill, when they perceived, to the left, another eminence, still higher than was that, on which they were now standing—upon the summit, and about the sides of which, numerous sheep were scattered. The young people proposed to walk up it: but hesitated, from an idea taken from the appearance of the land about it, that it was private property. They determined, however, to make enquiry of the first person they met; and seeing a group of children

issuing from the door of a humble cottage, they walked up to them, to ask those questions, which they imagined these little rustics might be able to answer.

The children at first started, but spoke not a word. At length, one who seemed somewhat older than the rest, came forward, and curt'sying said,—“That any body might walk in the Park if they liked it.”

“A Park is it?—Who does it belong to then?”—enquired Lord Vaversly.

The girl did not know. The mother, however, hearing the children talking as she imagined to strangers, now came to the door, though she started back on perceiving so many fine ladies and gentlemen assembled—but re-assured by the condescending manners of Miss Maitland, who, advancing from the rest, made the enquiries they wished, she told them,—“that though it belonged to the

“ Priory, yet being let to Squire Cal-
“ thorpe, who lived in one of the houses
“ in their village, to feed his sheep upon,
“ he let any body walk there as liked; and
“ that of a Sunday all the inhabitants of
“ Reigate, came to enjoy the benefit of a
“ ramble over the Park terrace.”

As this was the case, they no longer hesitated, and having amply rewarded the cottager for her information, who eyed the piece of gold put into her hand by Miss Maitland, with an astonishment which seemed to deprive her of utterance, they prepared to ascend to the utmost verge of the hill.

The elder part of the company did not feel disposed to extend their ramble: and, therefore, declined accompanying the young ones—telling them, they would walk leisurely down the road again, back to the inn, where they would patiently await their arrival. Emily offered to return with them; but to this the young

men made many objections ; and Miss Maitland adding her wishes to their entreaties, she agreed to make one of their party up the hill.

She, accordingly, bade them farewell for a short time, and accepting an arm of each of her companions, who seemed to vie with each other, which should pay her the greatest attention, crossed the stile or gate, which admitted them into the Park. They soon reached the broad terrace, which stretches along, upon the summit of the hill, where they stopt, as it were,³ involuntarily, to contemplate the beauty and tranquillity of the scene around them. The last rays of the setting sun, still tinged the clouds with a golden hue, and threw a mellow lustre over the landscape, which, from the eminence on which they now stood, appeared even more extended, than it had seemed below. The air was so still, that had it not been for the various rural sounds that met the ear, they might have

almost fancied that nature had made a pause. The monotonous tinkling of the sheep-bell, the faint twittering of the sky-lark, as it sought its nest in an adjoining meadow, alone interrupted the general stillness—and they stood fixed, as it were, by enchantment, without uttering a single word.

Their situation was so elevated, that only one or two of the houses were now visible, the rest being totally under the hill, and of these little else could be seen but the chimneys,—so that they seemed far removed from the noise and bustle of the world, and in complete sequestration from the “busy hum of men.”

Immediately below the place on which they now stood, lay a romantic dell, in which was picturesquely placed one solitary cottage, such as might have been supposed to be the residence of Thomson's Lavinia. The curling smoke which issued from the chimney, announced it to contain an inhabitant; though no

vestage of any human being was to be discovered in its environs. At length, however, a man was seen coming along the path, which wound round the base of the hill, with a stick across his shoulder, to which was suspended a wallet.— They conjectured that he might be the tenant of this humble abode; and Imagination immediately supplied the finishing strokes of the picture,—by representing the interior of the cottage, with the wife busily preparing the supper, and the children eagerly welcoming his return.

In a few moments, part of this visionary scene was realized; for, on hearing his well-known, and long expected whistle, a group of children ran forward to meet him. He then laid down his wallet, and taking the one which appeared to be the youngest, up in his arms, whilst another laid hold of his hand, the elder ones, (one of whom carried the wallet,) skipping on before, he crossed a sort of little gate or style, (which

served as a boundary to the little ones to prevent their straying,) and in this manner triumphantly entered—*his own home* :—where the peasant experiences, perhaps, far more real enjoyment than those in a more exalted station.

By entering the cottage, he was now concealed from their view, and, discoursing upon the happiness which appeared to be his lot, (for he was evidently so at that moment,) Emily, and her two companions, proceeded along this verdant carpet to the utmost extremity of the terrace.

On the opposite side, towards Reigate, another scene presented itself, which, though very different to that they had been contemplating with such enthusiasm, was yet replete with grandeur and sublimity ; and to some persons would possess greater charms, than the more calm, and tranquil scenery would offer.

In the valley lay the Priory, an ancient mansion, to which the park was conti-

guous; and before it spread a sheet of water, which added greatly to the general interest. Beyond the house, at no great distance, arose Riegate Hill, whose barren and chalky sides, on which here and there a few sheep only were scattered, shewed a feature of wildness, which, though productive of awe and wonder, was not so pleasing to our party, as the scene which had so entranced them, from the opposite side of the terrace.

They seemed never weary of admiring it; and, as the moon was now rising, stopt once more before they descended the slope which led to the road, to take a farewell look. The various features of the landscape were now seen less distinctly—but what they lost by this partial obscurity, they gained in general effect. At length, however, they were compelled to leave it; and quitting the spot which had afforded them so much pleasure, they descended from their elevation, and once more entered the narrow, dusty lane,

which led from thence to the town of Reigate. The vast height of the banks on each side of this lane, which have a romantic appearance in the day-time, (the road having been cut through the hill,) now entirely excluded the moon-beams, and rendered it so dark, that they feared it must be much later than they had imagined. They hastened forwards, therefore, as quickly as the darkness would permit—feeling assured that they must already have greatly exceeded their time, and that their friends would be waiting supper for them.

They were right in their conjecture; for they had so far trespassed upon their patience, that by the time they reached the inn, it was nearly ten o'clock; and Miss Maitland, anxious for Emily, was beginning to be seriously uneasy at their lengthened absence.

The cause of their detention, however, appeared a sufficient apology for their delay; and the elder part of the com-

pany, were half inclined to be sorry, that their idleness had prevented them, from being participators of the pleasure, naturally arising from the contemplation of such scenes, as the young people had been so eloquent in the praise of.

Wearied with the day's amusement, after drinking to the future felicity of Henry and Olivia, they retired early :— but to some individuals of the party, sleep was long a stranger.

Lord Vaversly was one of these. During the whole evening his mind had been fluctuating between the conflicting passions of love and pride, and had been, in some periods of it, so harassed by these opposite sensations, as to be in a state nearly bordering upon agony. The sensible and rational conversation of Emily, had raised his passion for her to so great a degree, that he felt convinced there would be no happiness for him without her ; and had he not been with-held by the presence of Edward, it is more than

probable, that, thrown off his guard by the feelings of the moment, he would have made her an avowal of his affection.

Yet, when he came to reflect seriously; in the solitude of his own apartment, he was glad that he had not proceeded thus far—for the same obstacle still remained—and the uncertainty, and most probable obscurity of her birth, was a difficulty which, he feared, must inevitably separate them for ever.

With the vanity common to young men of his age, it never once occurred to him, that there was a probability of a refusal on the part of Emily, should he once make up his mind to get over the unfortunate circumstances of her birth—indeed, he had more than once fancied, that she saw the affection with which she had inspired him; and that an avowal of his passion was only wanting, for her to declare, that her affections were likewise fixed on him. This idea had gained additional strength during their walk of

this evening ; for having noticed the evident attention she paid him, to that she bestowed on his friend Edward, he had no longer a doubt as to the reality of his former surmises.

In this, however, he was completely deceived. — Emily, in pursuance of her resolution, had endeavoured as much as possible to shun Edward, and whenever it lay in her power, had certainly appeared to give the preference to his Lordship ; in such slight circumstances only as retaining his arm, when it was necessary, from the narrowness of the path, or from any other cause, to quit one of them ; or attending first to him, when each had, perhaps, addressed to her a question at the same moment. — It was only in these kind of trifling occurrences, that she had made any difference between them ; and even then, it was a strong effort of self-denial, — for, had she followed the bent of her inclinations, her every wish, her

every thought, would have been exclusively devoted to Edward.

That Lord Vaversly entertained for her any other than a brotherly affection, she had not the most remote idea ; and considering him only in that light, she ever treated him with that easy familiarity, a relationship of that nature might warrant. Had she been more clear-sighted, it would have induced her to change her mode of conduct ; for though she strenuously exerted herself to combat the preference she felt for Edward, yet she could never have prevailed on herself to encourage the addresses of another, though that other had even been Lord Vaversly, whom she greatly esteemed.

Yet, notwithstanding her wise resolution in respect to Edward, he daily made fresh advances in her good opinion : and she feared, that instead of erasing his image from her heart, (which, knowing the passion she felt for him to be hope-

less, she earnestly essayed to accomplish,) it was implanted there more deeply than ever, and that if she succeeded no better in her future attempts, her happiness and peace of mind were lost for ever.

It was not without much pain, and an acute pang of regret, that she adopted a line of conduct towards Edward, so different to that which her own inclination would have prompted; but she thought it could not fail of being attended by the effect she wished; though it was with a species of agony, she reflected, that this sort of conduct towards him, must inevitably lessen her in his good opinion, as it must undoubtedly appear to be the result of caprice, or some other motive equally childish and ridiculous.

Let the consequence be what it would, however, she determined to persevere, and trusted that, eventually, she should gain a victory over her unfortunate partiality—but, in the struggle, her viva-

city was subdued, her appetite gone, her spirits fled, — and she had yet made no progress towards eradicating this unlucky prepossession.

When she retired this evening, the peaceful scenes she had lately been contemplating, passed in review before her; and she fancied that even in such a cottage as the secluded one in the valley, she could find happiness with Edward.— She then blamed herself for giving way to an idea so romantic, and endeavoured to court the blessing of repose—but the remembrance of Edward would intrude, and effectually banished sleep, till long after the morning-light had dawned through the window of her chamber.

Edward had more than once lately noticed her constrained and altered manners, and would have deemed her conduct strange, had he not placed it to the account of a growing partiality, which he imagined her to entertain for his friend, Lord Vaversly. Her evident preference

of him this evening, had impressed this conviction more strongly, and he now felt certain, of what he had before only surmised: and as he had previously made up his mind to the idea of his Lordship's affection for Emily, he naturally supposed that they understood each other, though for some reason, which they thought proper to keep to themselves, they had not yet declared their intentions to the rest of the family.

No long period, however, he supposed would be suffered to elapse before they did so, and he entertained so good an opinion of each, that he thought they could not fail of being happy. Lord Vaversly was a man of honor and integrity; and of a disposition and temper perfectly amiable: and Emily —— but, in his opinion, she was the most perfect of all created beings.

The air of Riegate, or some other cause, was not favorable to either of our

three wanderers, who each complained in the morning of their want of rest. But the pallid hue of Emily's countenance completely alarmed Miss Maitland, who feared that she was really ill, and blamed herself for suffering her to take so long a walk, the preceding evening.

Emily, however, would not allow this to have had any bad effect upon her, (conscious as she was of the real cause,) but, in answer to the tender enquiries of Miss Maitland, said,—“ That her paleness and languor were merely occasioned by want of rest, for, though they had been so long absent the evening before, they had walked to no great distance.”

Miss Maitland here suffered the matter to rest, but she felt assured that the pallid looks, and evident depression of Emily, proceeded from some concealed source; and she determined to seize the very first

opportunity upon their arrival in town, to question her, though with as much attention to her feelings as possible, concerning this alarming change in her conduct and appearance.

Very soon after breakfast the party quitted Riegate, and returned to London; leaving Mrs. Watkins at Clapham by the way. But, by the time they reached Park Lane, Emily was much indiposed, and so weary from the effect of the sleepless night she had past at the Inn, that instead of appearing at dinner, she was advised by Miss Maitland, to take a sandwich, and then lie down upon the sofa, in order to court repose for an hour or two.

To oblige her Emily complied. And when she awoke she was so much better, and felt herself so completely restored, that she declared herself able to take another ramble. Edward immediately offered his services for a companion. A

blush of pleasure crossed her cheek, and she was on the point of expressing her readiness to accompany him, but recollecting the resolution she had formed so recently, she immediately, though not without evident embarrassment and hesitation, declined his offer.

“Another evening”—said Miss Maitland—“she will be more fit for a walking companion, but to-night I think it will be more advisable to stay at home.”

“To-morrow then,”—said Edward,—“perhaps Miss Doraton may be sufficiently recovered to take a walk with me to Kensington Gardens—you know,” added he, more particularly addressing Emily, “I have long promised myself the pleasure of shewing you the more retired, and in my opinion, the most beautiful parts of that charming place.”

“That will be exactly the thing for

“ to-morrow evening, if it is but fine ; ” —
returned Miss Maitland — “ for Emily
“ will want a little amusement, to recon-
“ cile her to the loss of our dear Olivia.
“ And by that time, I hope she will in
“ some degree have recovered her good
“ looks, for the air of Riegate seems to
“ have chased every particle of colour
“ from her cheeks.”

Emily smiled, and attempted to make light of the change in her appearance ; but she secretly resolved, in strict adherence to her former plan, not to go with Edward, though how to deny him, or what kind of excuse to make, she did not know.

The next day, however, she declared herself quite well, and the evening proving uncommon fine, Edward solicited her company to take a walk. She was on the point of refusing him, though not without a pang of acute regret, when her denial was arrested by Miss Maitland's

saying—“ Ah ! do, my dear, a walk will
“ be of service to you.”

What to do she knew not. To refuse, she thought, was now impossible, without incurring some suspicions in the bosom of Miss Maitland, as to her real motive for declining a walk with Edward, on so fine an evening. — Her own inclination, too, strongly urged her to accept his offer—yet, where was her fortitude, if she suffered herself, in the first instance, to break through the plans she had herself formed : — but what excuse could she make? ——— “ there is no alternative,” thought she, “ on the present occasion, “ but another time, I shall be, perhaps, “ better prepared.”

“ Have you any objection, my dear, “ to walk out this evening ?” asked Miss Maitland, who saw in her conduct and manner something very strange and unusual—“ perhaps you think a walk to “ Kensington will be too much for you ?

“—Do not go, my dear, without it
“accords with your own inclination.”

“O ! I have no objection ;”—answered Emily, quickly—“only I—I—for I
“should like it very much !—only I—I”
—she knew not what to say ;—and feeling herself more and more embarrassed, whilst the deepest crimson dyed her cheeks, stammered out something about keeping him no longer waiting, and saying, she would run up stairs to equip herself for the ramble, flew out of the room, leaving Miss Maitland and Edward in no little surprise, at her strange, and unaccountable conduct.

When she reached her dressing-room, she was almost breathless from the agitation of the moment—and her hands trembled so violently, that it was as much as she could do, to tie the strings of her bonnet. She felt conscious how silly her conduct must have appeared, to the two persons, whose good opinion she most

valued ;—and this reflection, added so much to her perplexity, that she could scarcely command her tears. She almost dreaded to go down again, lest any observation might be made—but yet, fearing that if she continued long up stairs, Miss Maitland would fancy she was ill, and come and seek her, she endeavoured to subdue her emotion, and throwing her mantle hastily over her shoulders, once more descended to the drawing-room. With much quickness of manner, she professed herself ready to accompany him, and they accordingly sat out :— Miss Maitland pursuing them with her eyes to a considerable distance, as they crossed the Park towards Kensington Gardens.

The conduct and manner of Emily rendered her extremely uneasy—but the more she reflected upon them, the more she felt convinced that they proceeded from some secret attachment. It could not be for an unworthy object—she had too

good an opinion of Emily, to suppose so — for whom then could it be? — Was it her nephew? — Yes; — such a character as Edward's, was but too likely to create a tender interest in the bosom of an amiable girl like Emily. — It must certainly be him then! — thought Miss Maitland — O! that such an alliance could be brought about!

This idea once admitted, she now recollected many instances, which, at the time, had been unheeded by her, that placed the affair, in her opinion, beyond a doubt. And it relieved her from a weight of uneasiness: — for, notwithstanding the continued assertions of Edward, that he never meant to marry, she did not despair of seeing him yet change his resolution, and she flattered herself that such a change was very likely to be effected, by the gentle manners, and amiable qualities of her adopted daughter. She ardently wished that

such a circumstance might take place;—
for to see her favorite the wife of Edward
would far exceed any hope she had, hitherto,
entertained for her.

END OF VOL. III.

ERRATA.

Page 71, line 10, *for your read yours.*

73, — 21, *for no a better read no better.*

91, last line but one, *for buring read burning.*

155, line 18, *for her read him.*

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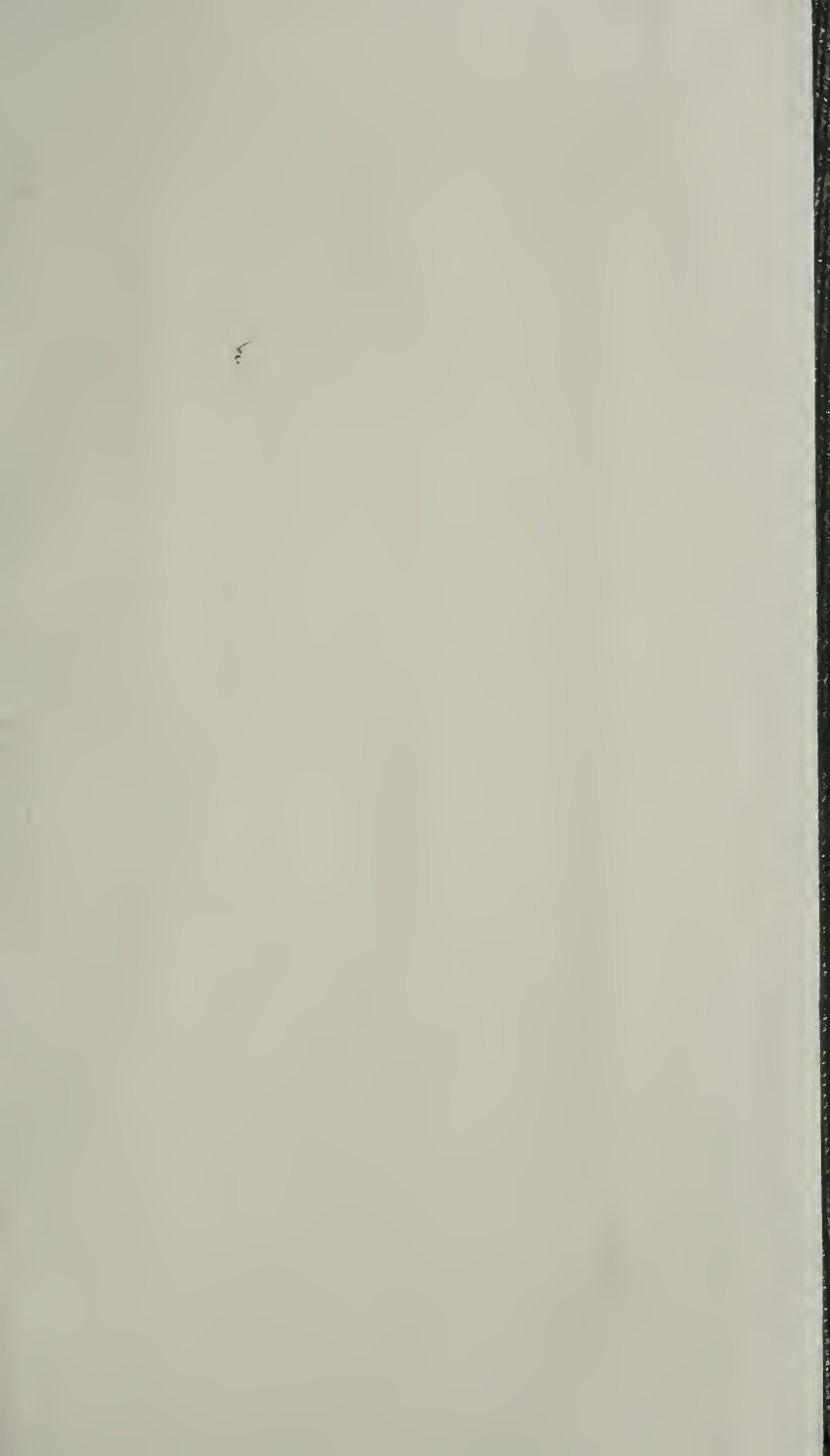
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